

BASEBALL

INDIVIDUAL PLAY AND
TEAM PLAY IN DETAIL

CLARKE and DAWSON





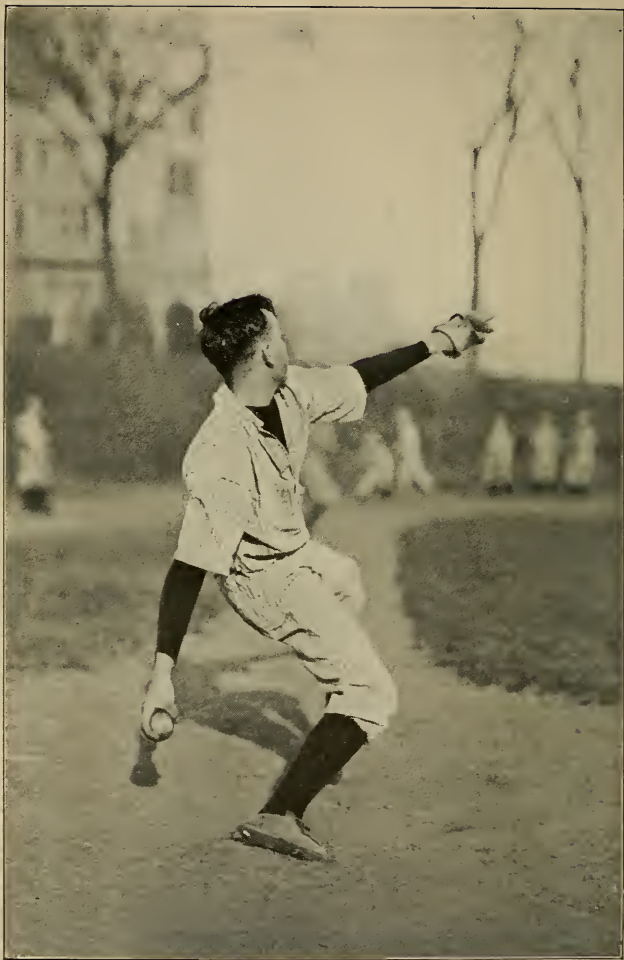
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BASEBALL



A STRAIGHT OVERHAND DELIVERY.

Illustrating the proper position for getting the full power of the back and arm.

BASEBALL

INDIVIDUAL PLAY AND TEAM PLAY IN DETAIL

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
AND DIAGRAMS



NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1915

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Published April, 1915



APR 14 1915

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INTRODUCTION

The present position of the game of baseball in the United States, the enthusiasm with which it is played, and the interest with which it is watched by the American people have made it very evident that it would be valuable both to players and spectators to have easily available a book formulating what has been found to be the best way of playing the game. Although it is a sport which is most widely followed, yet comparatively few players, and fewer spectators, really understand it thoroughly. The reason for this will be apparent when one realizes that the leaders of the game, with a knowledge gained through years of experience and careful study, have, for the most part, reserved this knowledge for those immediately under their control, while the average player and spectator must be content to play and watch the game as best he can.

A brief review of the development of the game will help to bring out the facts that have to do with the writing of this book.

Baseball originated here in America in the simple pastime of tossing, hitting, and catching a

ball. At first two, then three, boys played the game. Gradually the number of players was increased; an infield and an outfield were formed; play became more complicated; and rules were drawn up. When the game had assumed definite form, its popularity spread throughout the country; for here was a sport which was good fun—it including throwing, batting, running, and catching under the most exciting of conditions; and eighteen men could take part in it at one time. Year after year the game was played with increasing interest—boys were playing it in their early teens, and continued to do so in manhood. In the meantime, after years of pure fun, men began to specialize in the game. They studied it, for they realized that, in addition to purely natural physical skill, other things were necessary; and these were to be acquired only through observation and practice. Pitchers, instead of being contented to throw a straight ball, began to curve it. Combination play—team-work—was developed. Men took advantage of knowledge gained through experience and began to diagnose plays ahead of time.

Certain principles were deduced, laws were discovered, and years of experience produced a class of experts—men who were skilful in physical execution and keen in mental activity—skilful

in handling the ball, in running the bases, and in batting; keen in observing and putting into effect the laws of probability.

And from among these experts leaders were selected to manage the various clubs which were soon formed. It became the duty of these managers to determine the style of play to be followed by their respective teams and to teach the recruits the fine points of professional baseball. These fine points, subsequently known as "inside baseball," acquired by the managers only after years of experience, were imparted to the chosen few; that is, to the members of the clubs. Amateur players and the general public were left to pick up baseball knowledge as they could—all the while considering the "inside baseball" of professionalism as something sacred and unknowable. As a result, we have baseball played in two ways: one in which the players have not had the opportunity of learning the best methods of play; and the other, in which the players are all schooled by experienced masters of the game. One class of players is carried away by the thrill of bodily action and the excitement of contest, failing to bring their minds properly into the play. The other class of players, through experience and careful instruction, are made to bring all their faculties into play at all stages of the game.

In the present work, the authors, after careful study based on personal experience, inquiry, and comparison, have formulated for the general public, including the amateur and professional player, the whole subject of baseball as it is played in the most advanced circles, namely, in the major leagues.

In addition, chapters are included which should be of interest and value to spectators of the game and to college ball-players.

W. J. C.

F. T. D.

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I

THE CATCHER

RECEIVING THE BALL

A catcher first of all should be a clean receiver; that is, he should be able to catch and hold any kind of a ball the pitcher may throw. Since it is the catcher who signals to the pitcher for the particular kind of ball to be thrown, the catcher can always be ready to handle the ball cleanly. He should take his position behind the home-plate and as close to it as possible (just out of reach of the batter's club), with both feet squarely on the ground. (For battery signals see Team Plays 29.) The left foot should be slightly ahead of the right, as this position will shorten the step necessary for the catcher as he throws. Many catchers make the mistake of becoming rigid, and, with tightened muscles, fighting the ball, as it were. This attitude is decidedly the wrong one. The catcher should be the most alert man on the team, for he is allowed the least amount of time to change his position in receiving the ball; hence he should be free in every muscle.

While receiving the low ball, the catcher should not squat, with the hands in an upright position; he should rather drop the hands (fingers downward). (See illustration.) But after catching a low ball he should not continue the downward course of the ball with the glove; the better way is to bring it up gracefully and easily. This upward motion will sometimes cause the ball to be called a strike, while if the hands went down it would be a ball.

While giving signals and studying base-runners, the catcher should sit on his haunches; and when catching behind small batters, he should stay in the squatting position. This gives the pitcher a better mark at which to throw. If the ball approaches or touches the ground, it should be met with the broadside of the glove, naturally, since this presents the greatest surface; and low, ground balls should be smothered when it is not possible to play them cleanly. The catcher, in order to make certain of blocking ground balls, should, if possible, get his whole body in front of the ball—presenting the solid front of feet, legs, glove, arms, and breast protector. A catcher should practise this play deliberately; should have a player throw balls into the dirt, that he may become accustomed to handling low ground balls from the pitcher.



Correct position.



Incorrect position.

THE CATCHER RECEIVING A LOW-THROWN BALL FROM THE PITCHER.

It should be a firmly ingrained habit with the catcher *never to drop the ball*, neither in the most informal practice, nor in a game. Carelessness in practice brings about uncertainty of control in games.

Catchers, hold the ball! and when catching and throwing the ball, keep the head up, and eyes ahead, avoid looking down at the ground while swinging the arm back prior to throwing. That quick glance at the ground before taking the step to throw was probably necessary when our grandfathers played in pastures where the footing was uncertain; but to-day we are reasonably certain of having firm, level ground beneath our feet; therefore, the eyes may be used entirely in following the play. With catchers and basemen the positions of the bases ought to be so firmly fixed in their minds' eye that conscious searching for them is unnecessary.

THROWING

In order to be of full value to a team, the catcher must be able to throw accurately with speed, and without delay. Instantaneous delivery of the ball is necessary when a man is stealing a base. But a speedy ball cannot make up for a delay in getting the ball off—the base-runner is either *safe* or *out* generally by the smallest fraction of

a second; therefore any false motion on the part of the catcher after receiving the ball from the pitcher may allow the base-runner to steal a base. The catcher should catch the ball, shift his feet into the throwing posture, and draw back his arm simultaneously; then he should instantly send the ball on a line to the base.

RETURNING THE BALL TO THE PITCHER

Return the ball so that it can be handled easily by him. Don't make him jump or stoop for the ball. On hot days work the pitcher slowly. It is very advisable for the catcher to get into the habit of returning the ball to the pitcher with a clean, sharp delivery. This kind of return keeps the pitcher alert, active, and "in the game." The ball should be thrown with the same motion that the catcher uses in throwing to a base; and the ball should be thrown high—at about the level of the pitcher's head. (This ball, therefore, with a little more speed, will be exactly the same as used in throwing to second base.)

WHEN THERE IS A BASE-RUNNER ON FIRST BASE

The catcher, after receiving the ball from the pitcher, should glance at first base before beginning the forward motion of the arm in returning the ball to the pitcher. This action will assist

the catcher in preventing the runner from making the "delayed steal." (For definition of "delayed steal" see Team Play 24.)

THROWING TO BASES

The catcher should constantly practise assuming the throwing posture with great swiftness. His success as a thrower depends upon the rapidity with which he can catch and throw the ball, and proficiency in these acts can be obtained only by making this swiftness a habit through early and constant practice.

During the early part of the season when base-running is being practised, the catcher should avail himself of every opportunity to throw to bases to catch runners. Practise throwing to bases with your mask and protector on, just as you do in a game. Too often catchers throw with these implements on only during a game—going through the practice without them; then when they do put them on, they cannot throw accurately and quickly.

The catcher should not allow the batter to bother him, but should throw as freely as though there were no batter near him. If the batter interferes in any way with the catcher's throwing, the batter will be declared out. (In case the batter does interfere, it is well for the catcher to

emphasize this interference, and call the umpire's attention to it.)

It is only through this constant practice of throwing to catch runners (always having a batter hitting at the ball), that a catcher can get confidence in himself; and this confidence will enable him to avoid calling for *waste balls*. (For definition of *waste balls* see Team Play 29.) When a catcher gets into the habit of calling for waste balls, he constantly gets his pitcher into difficulty, *merely to protect himself* against having a base stolen. When a pitcher has wasted one or two balls on a batter, the batter has the decided advantage over the pitcher, and will, if he be an intelligent player, generally hit the next ball, knowing that the pitcher will try to get a strike over on him.

This constant practice mentioned above, of throwing to catch base-runners, will enable the catcher to throw under all circumstances—which is one of the most valuable assets he can have.

THROWING TO FIRST BASE

When the catcher has fielded a batted ball, he should throw to first base with an underhanded swing—without straightening up—*always throwing to the second-base side of first* at least four feet, to avoid hitting the runner. This also allows the

first-baseman to catch the ball without fear of collision with the runner. The catcher should try for all slow hit balls that are within his reach or that of the pitcher, and if he can get the ball should tell the pitcher so. His immediate start after the ball will help him to recover all balls within his reach; and if the ball is out of his reach, he will at least have done all in his power. The least hesitation on the part of the catcher to field a bunt or short hit is fatal; hence the necessity of *getting the habit* of trying for everything, "with the crack of the bat." The catcher, when the runner is forced at home, should touch home-base and quickly throw the ball to first base three or four feet to the left of the base. He should study the base-runners carefully before giving signals. This will often enable him to diagnose their intentions. There is a strong probability that if the batter intends to attempt a sacrifice bunt, the runner will take a long lead off first. (Read Team Play 19.) It is advisable occasionally, when the bunt is expected, to call for a waste ball and snap the ball to first base to try to catch the runner off the base. (Since the first-baseman will see the signal for a waste ball, he will know what the play is to be and will cover first base to receive the ball.) The ball, on this play, should be thrown low, on the inside of the base if possible, thus allowing

the baseman to put the ball directly on the foot of the runner as he slides back to the base. When there is a runner on first and second, the catcher can throw to first base to catch the runner (either using the waste ball or not); then, if the catcher thinks that the runner on second will go to third if the same play is again attempted, he can feint to throw to first, run into the diamond and trap the runner between second and third if he attempts to go to third.

For plays in which to retire the runner on first base see Team Plays 17 and 18.

When there is a left-handed batter up, the catcher, using the batter as a blind, can often slip the ball to first base and catch the runner off.

THROWING TO SECOND BASE

When there is a man on first base the catcher, as mentioned above, should study the base-runner. The catcher may often detect the runner's intention to steal second. Anxiety to get a good lead, nervousness in watching the pitcher, furtive glances at the coacher or the players' bench, any unusual action—these often indicate that the runner will steal. If these indications are strong enough to justify the sacrifice of a ball, the catcher should call for a waste ball; then,

if the base-runner is stealing, the catcher will have the ball high and wide from the pitcher, away from the batter in a good position to throw to second base. On this play, with a right-handed hitter up, the short-stop will receive the ball. The ball should be thrown slightly to the third-base side of second base. This will allow the short-stop to catch the ball while on the run without overstepping the base. The catcher, as he makes his throw, should not watch the runner but should keep his eye directly on second base. (First-baseman should call out: "There he goes.") When there are no positive indications that the runner is about to steal second, the catcher will, of course, call for various kinds of balls; and whether the second-baseman or short-stop will receive the throw, *if the runner steals second*, depends upon *what kind of a ball the pitcher throws* and whether the batter be a dead right or left field hitter. For instance: If, with a right-handed batter up, the catcher signals for a curve, the second-baseman will cover second; because a curved ball, being slower than a straight one, will generally be hit to the left of the diamond—hence the necessity of the short-stop remaining in his position. If the catcher signals for a straight ball, the short-stop covers second base. In each case the reverse is true with a left-handed batter up. *And the catcher should preferably throw the*

ball a few feet to that side of the base from which the man who will receive it is coming.

If the base-runner on second base takes a very big lead off the base, the catcher should occasionally throw the ball to second base. After doing this a few times in a game, if the runner persists in taking a long lead (and plans on going to third if the catcher throws to second), it is well for the catcher to feint to throw to second, and if the runner starts to third, to run into the diamond with the ball, feinting to throw first to third and then to second—thus getting the runner between the bases; and at the same time shortening the distance which he must finally throw to catch the runner. If the catcher were to throw to third when the runner starts for that base, it would be an easy matter for the runner to turn and go back to second; and if the catcher, from his position behind the plate, were to throw to second the runner could easily run to third.

If there is a man on second, and none out, and the batter is expected to bunt (see Team Play 19), the man on second may be caught frequently (since he is leading toward third), by calling for a waste ball and snapping the ball to second.

THROWING TO THIRD BASE

A great deal of time should be spent in practising the throw to third base, with the batter in his box and a runner going from second to third base. The throw should be low and on the inside corner of the base.

With a runner on first and third if the runner on first starts for second on the pitcher's delivery, play as follows:

The catcher must either throw through to second (if the runner attempts to steal second) or make a feint to throw to second, and then throw to third. This feint (or bluff) must be made by using a motion identical with that with which the catcher throws to second—a weak attempt will be useless to draw the man off third base. (A catcher should practise this “bluff” a great deal.) Occasionally a sharp return to the pitcher will be effective; he can either snap the ball to third or to second, or feint and throw to third.

If a runner on third base is taking a big lead off the base, it is well to snap the ball to the third-baseman and try to catch the runner off the base. Sometimes in this play the waste ball may be called—this, however, depends upon how well the pitcher is working. *Waste balls ought not to be called for if the pitcher is having difficulty with his control!*

The catcher should not allow base-runners to take big leads off the bases. Frequently, when three men are on bases, these men take big leads, assuming that the pitcher and catcher are too intent upon playing for the batter to pay any attention to them. It is just at this time, therefore, that a cool-headed catcher can catch base-runners napping. The catcher should squat apparently to give his signal to his pitcher—but really to study the base-runners—give a waste ball signal (which, of course, the basemen get and are ready to cover the bases), and by a snap throw drive the ball to one of the bases. This will at least tend to make the runners a bit less free to lead off the bases.

If a catcher has caught a man between third base and home, he should run the man back toward third. In fact, whenever an opposing base-runner is caught between bases, he should be driven on the dead run back to the base from which he came, and when he is ten or fifteen feet from that base, the ball should be snapped—*not thrown easily*—retiring the runner by a single throw if possible. It is rarely necessary to make more than one or two throws, unless it be to catch the opposing pitcher, who must be kept going as long as possible. If a runner who sees that he is out at home stops and runs up and

down the line (to let the batter go to second), the catcher should run him back to third as fast as he can, snapping the ball to the third-baseman, who can put the man out, and then throw to second to retire the man trying to make that base.

FIELDING HIS POSITION

The catcher should at all times be "on his toes," that is, swift to follow the ball either as it rolls into the diamond off the batsman's club, or is fouled into the air; instantly throwing off his mask as he goes after the ball. *Having studied out beforehand where to throw the ball, if called upon to field it,* he throws it without wasting time in figuring out the play.

Before the game starts, the catcher should note the position of the sun and the direction of the wind (especially if there is a high wind). If the sun shines directly in his eyes, it is advisable to let the infielders handle high fly balls if they can, as they will have the sun at their backs. As high foul balls, going straight up in the air, are most puzzling to handle, it will be of great assistance to the catcher if he knows the direction of the wind, since he can then make allowances for that wind. By tossing a bit of grass or dust into the air or by looking at the flags, he can easily determine the

direction of the wind. These high foul flies are especially hard to judge when the sky is very clear (a high sky). After the catcher takes his first look and locates the ball, he should drop his eyes momentarily to the ground (this will relieve the strain on the eyes); then upon the next upward look, since the ball will be well on its downward course, he can readily judge it. By gluing the eyes to the ball when it is high in the air, a catcher often finds himself going around in a circle—frequently misjudging the ball entirely.

Practice and careful observation will soon enable a catcher to tell by the sound of a foul whether it has gone into the air in such a way that it can be recovered by him. If there is only a slight *tick*, he will know that the ball has merely risen a little out of its original course, and will go almost on a line to the back-stop. But if there is a decidedly heavy crack, the chances are that it has gone nearly straight up; then he must sweep his mask off as he whirls to start after it, all the while looking up in search of the ball. Speed in whirling, speed in throwing off the mask, and speed in getting started after the ball are all necessary to a good catcher. The pitcher can help his catcher in the matter of fouls—by yelling to him *if the foul cannot be caught*. Otherwise the catcher should try for everything.

There are only two occasions when the catcher should leave his own position and go to *back up*—(reinforce) another player. One occurs when, with a man on first base, the batter hits into a double play. The catcher, seeing what is about to happen, should run from his position to a point about 30 feet back of first base, in a direct line with the throw from second to first. On this play the catcher should start with the batter, and should run with all his speed obliquely to the point named. If the throw is bad, he can recover the ball and catch the runner as he rounds first base on his way to second. This play does not happen every day; yet many a game has been saved by the catcher taking this position. (See Diagram I, page 199.) The catcher should also back up first base when, with no runners on base, the second-baseman is fielding a ball where the throw must be made hurriedly. Here the chances of the ball being thrown badly are increased; therefore the catcher can be of use.

Then, too, this quick start with the batter will help to keep the catcher's legs limbered up, since the stooping posture which the catcher assumes while giving signals tends to harden and stiffen the legs and muscles.

When receiving the ball on throws from the out-field to prevent a man from scoring, the catcher

should station himself on the home-plate as a target at which the fielder can throw. As the ball comes in, however, he should so place himself as to have his body in front of the ball (blocking it if necessary). Upon catching the ball, he should speedily meet the runner and tag him as far as possible from the home-base, touching him with the ball in such a way that he cannot slide either around or under the ball. By waiting for the runner to come to the catcher (after he has the ball) the catcher often fails to put the man out. All thrown balls from the outfield that look as though they would land three or four feet in front of home-base should be reached for and caught before they bound (handled as a first-baseman catches his low throws)—thus avoiding the necessity of handling a very difficult bound; then the catcher should whirl and put the ball on the runner.

WORKING WITH HIS PITCHER

The most valuable catcher is the one who will forget himself entirely and devote all his attention to easing the duties of his pitcher, and making him more efficient. For instance, if, when there is a runner on third base, the catcher knows that the batter cannot hit a drop-ball, he should call for that ball, no matter how hard it may be to catch.

First of all, the catcher should study the batter.

He should try to diagnose from the batter's general attitude, step, swing, etc., just what kind of ball he will most likely *not* be able to hit. If the catcher is not at all familiar with the batter's style, of course it is impossible to tell absolutely what he will do. But there are certain points about a batter that quite generally indicate what kind of ball he *likes*. (Of course, there are some batters who hit almost any kind of a ball.) Now, if a batter pulls his front foot away from the base, and has a tendency to throw his body decidedly in the same direction, it is quite probable that he will hit an inside ball; therefore the catcher should call for balls on the outside corner of the base, as they will be most difficult for the batter to hit. If a batter stands close to his base and uses a long bat, it will be difficult for him to hit a *close* ball. A batter with a long bat standing away from the base generally finds difficulty in hitting a wide drop-ball.

After a batter has made a clean safe hit, the catcher should make a deliberate effort to remember just what kind of a ball it was that the batter hit—and he should not call for that ball when the same batter comes up again—but should try him on something else.

It does not require much observation to enable a catcher to discover into which field a batter hits naturally. And when the catcher has satisfied

himself that a batter hits into a certain field, he should call for those balls which will tend to make the batter hit into the opposite field. For instance, if a right-handed batter hits naturally into left field, the catcher should make the pitcher keep the ball on the outside corner of the base, thus forcing the batter to hit into right field. It will be found that if this batter is forced to hit outside balls, he will not be able to hit as hard or well; and often he will be unable to hit at all. Of course, success in thus pitching to batters depends upon the pitcher's ability to give the catcher just the kind of ball called for. The catcher should get into the habit of requiring a definitely placed ball every time he signals; it must be either high or low and either close to the batter, or on the outside of the base; but *rarely over the centre, waist-high, unless absolutely necessary.*

When there are men on bases and the ball is hit to the pitcher, the catcher should coach him where to throw the ball. On these plays, the catcher has everything in front of him, while the pitcher usually has his back to the base-runners. So, if the catcher calls out immediately to the pitcher, the latter can whirl and throw without any hesitation.

It is advisable for a catcher always to have two gloves ready for use—in case something happens

to the glove he is using. While breaking in a new glove, he can use the new one when there are no runners on bases—laying the old one on the ground beside him to be used when the bases are occupied by runners.

A catcher should see to it that his chest-protector is pliable, not stiff or blown up hard. Stiffness in the protector impedes throwing and makes squatting uncomfortable.

II

THE PITCHER

Little need be said of the relative value of a pitcher to his team. To any one who knows baseball at all, this value is quite apparent. Other things being equal, the team with the best pitcher usually wins. And yet how few people know just what constitutes good pitching! To the average spectator, a man seems to be a good pitcher if he has lots of speed and good curves. But to a close student of the game it becomes at once apparent that a first-class pitcher must have a fast ball (and generally a curve), a slow ball, and control. The last-named qualification is the vitally important one.

CONTROL

And yet how few pitchers to-day can define the word *control*! The significance of the word *pitcher* to them is that he is one of nine men occupying a definite position in the game of baseball. He works by prearranged signals with the catcher, who may—for illustration—use one finger

for a fast ball and two fingers for a curve ball. We will grant that the pitcher has an abundance of speed and good curves; if the catcher signals for the fast ball, it is thrown, high or low, over the centre of the plate or wide—it does not seem to matter much to the pitcher—he has pitched a fast ball since it was called for. The same thing is often true of the curve ball. And the majority of pitchers to-day are satisfied to let it go at that! How often one hears the remark, “He has everything in the box to-day; yet the opposing batters are hitting the ball all over the field,” and again, “He has a thousand-dollar arm and a five-cent head.”

These pitchers think that *control* means placing every ball that they throw right over the heart of the base, waist-high. That is exactly what it does *not* mean. Strictly speaking, *control* means that ability in a pitcher which enables him (after studying the batter) to throw that ball which the batter cannot hit safely—always placing it either high or low (at the shoulders or knees) and either on the inside or outside corner of the base, *avoiding the waist-high ball over the centre of the base.*

Study the batsman as he takes his position to hit. In delivering the fast ball, try to place it at what is the batter's weakest point. And in

pitching the curve, try to break it low; that is the only safe and successful place to break it.

How often the remark is heard that "He hasn't a thing but a glove!" and yet this same pitcher may be a consistent winner. But study him well, and it will be found that he has two of the greatest assets—namely, brains and control: brains to note and remember a batter's weakness, and the control to pitch to it.

The pitcher, on those days when he is not pitching, should study the batters from the bench. This will enable him to pick out the various batters' weaknesses, and he can use the knowledge thus gained when he is in the box. While in the game, remember the balls which the various batters hit successfully—and try something else on them the next time they are at bat. If you find that during the game you are being hit freely, stop and try to "think out" what the trouble is; and the chances are you will find that you have been putting the ball over the middle of the base, breaking your curves high, or giving the batters just what they like. *Stop and think!* Do not become enraged and try to drive the ball past the batter's club, because "the faster they come, the farther they will go" (unless you mix a little brains with your speed). In these days when everybody has the art of curving

the ball the successful pitcher depends to a great extent upon a change of pace; that is, the alternating of fast balls with curves and slow balls. This change of pace will do more than anything else to prevent being hit freely.

EARLY-SEASON TRAINING

As is true in the case of every ball player, the pitcher should begin his early-season training by getting his whole body into good condition. It is a grave mistake to think that all a pitcher has to do is to get his arm into shape to throw nine innings twice a week. Many a pitcher has weakened in the last part of the game, not because his arm was not powerful enough, but because the rest of his physique was exhausted; he had neglected the rest of his body while training the arm alone. Road-work, dumb-bells, handball, anything to bring all the muscles into play, regularly, and out-of-doors if possible, will give a man the right start in his training. And during the early-season work, the pitchers, when not in the box, should work hard to get their legs in good condition. To get good wind and endurance chase fly balls in the outfield. Practise fielding bunts off the side lines; this will help wonderfully in games—and the work will help to put you in sound condition. Another excellent exercise is

that of batting fly balls to the outfield; swinging the bat will strengthen the arms and the back muscles. In order to pitch a long, hard game, your whole body will be called upon to reinforce your arm, and you will be called upon to hit and run bases like any other player; so prepare yourself by careful training.

GETTING CONTROL AND CARING FOR THE ARM

The importance of control has been emphasized above; we shall now deal with the methods of acquiring it. Some pitchers have no difficulty with control; it comes to them naturally, just as batting comes naturally to some players. But most pitchers are not so fortunate; they acquire control only after long practice. If you are one of the less fortunate, work to get your eye and muscles so trained that perfect co-ordination follows; in other words, so that you can control the ball. If necessary, pitch to a mark on a piece of canvas, or an old mattress set up against the wall. Make lines on the mattress (or canvas) at the height of a batter's knees and shoulders—put up sticks or boards six inches from each side of the base to indicate the batter's position. Then throw with the deliberate intention of placing the ball at a definite spot. Some managers advocate pitching to a dummy of the average batter's size.

Take a half-dozen balls and deliver them at the mark one after another; walk after them, return to your position and pitch again—the walk will limber you up. Repeat this for half an hour, day after day, and the result will be generally quite gratifying. Of course, if it is possible to have somebody catch for you, so much the better.

It is imperative, however, that the season be started with easy, slow, graceful throwing movements. Increase the speed day by day—learning to keep the fast ball high or low—at the shoulder or knee.

Develop the overhanded motion as much as possible with the long, swinging motion of the arm; follow the forward motion of the arm with the body, leaning forward as you throw. Bring the back into play as much as possible; this will increase your speed and decrease the strain on your arm. (See frontispiece.) Avoid using the short, jerky elbow motion in delivering the ball. Always remember to *throw the ball at some particular spot*, either high or low, on the inside or outside corner. The corners count as much as across the middle, and these balls are hard to hit safely.

A week's practice on the fast ball will strengthen the arm sufficiently to allow *gradual work* on the curve. Do not throw the curved ball until the arm has been made perfectly strong by the use

of speed (straight balls). Many pitchers have ruined their arms by beginning to throw curves before their arms were strong. The arm may *feel* strong very early in the season, but it really is not; the muscles are tender and are easily strained—especially by throwing curves. Right here applies the old saying that “A man is weakest when at his strongest.” Begin by throwing the curve slowly; then increase the speed day by day—never losing sight of the fact that every ball delivered must be over some part of the base.

To get the right control, pitch to batters in their position as much as your arm will permit.

Pitchers who are working for control, especially young players just starting out, should never try to pitch when the arm feels tired, “dead,” or heavy. Light work during the early spring (or late winter) with dumb-bells and pulleys will strengthen the arms and back. However, a great deal of this kind of work is not advisable, because a pitcher does not need a large, muscular arm; such arms are usually somewhat muscle-bound, lacking in flexibleness and snap qualities very essential to the pitcher’s arm. Probably one of the surest indications of the condition of the arm is the weight that the ball seems to have. If it feels light—and your arm responds readily—usually your arm is in good condition to pitch.

But if the ball feels heavy, and it is only with an effort that you can swing your arm, then be careful. It is an easy matter to make the arm sore; and as the pitcher's arm is his greatest asset, extreme care is necessary to avoid injuring it. The old policy of "pitching out" a soreness is a dangerous experiment to try, as the affected parts are usually aggravated all the more by forced exercise.

WARMING UP

Be sure to have your arm (and body too) warm before beginning to pitch hard. Start the preliminary throwing slowly, and increase the speed gradually until the required warmth is produced. Fifteen minutes is a safe time limit to place on the warming-up before a game; the last four or five minutes should be spent in throwing the ball as hard as you intend to in the game. How often have games been won and lost in the opening innings before the pitcher was well warmed up! The pitcher "hits his stride" toward the last of the game—but it is then too late. To go into the game properly warmed up means to pitch the best ball from the very beginning. Always keep the arm and body well covered—a good woollen shirt is desirable. (It is advisable to have a dry shirt handy, to which you can change if it is necessary to remain on the field.)

RUBBING THE ARM

If the arm feels fresh and strong and is without pain or heaviness, stay away from the "rubber." It is a bad thing to get into the habit of having the arm rubbed constantly. (Some masseurs rub the life all out of the arm.) Continued application of liniments to the arm produces what is known as the "medicine arm"—that is, one which depends upon the stimulating effects of the "rub"; in this case the muscles lose their natural life and demand artificial vigor. Needless to say, such arms soon become flabby and useless as pitching organs.

The tired, overworked, or strained arm needs first of all—rest! There are numerous remedies for sore arms—every trainer has a different one. They are all surface effects; no liniment reaches the sore spot—yet any counter-irritant will help to draw the soreness out. *A liberal application of hot towels is as good as anything.* If the arm feels heavy and "dead," especially if there is pain, rest it for a few days—don't throw at all; for in doing so you are likely to ruin it. After four or five days of rest, begin to throw gradually; and if there is no pain, and the arm has regained its vigor, then work carefully to prepare yourself to pitch. It is well, however, during this

rest, not to remain absolutely idle—the exercise gained in chasing balls is conducive to keeping in good physical condition (being careful not to strain the arm while returning the balls).

THE WASTE BALL

There are times when it is absolutely necessary for the catcher to receive the ball beyond the reach of the batter and at a height from which it is easy to throw. This ball is called the waste ball, because it is virtually wasted on the batter.

The pitcher should develop the ability to throw this ball whenever the catcher calls for it. It should be thrown high and outside of the base away from the batter—so that he cannot hit it. It is pretty certain that when the waste-ball signal is given, some position will be left uncovered; therefore do all in your power to perfect the play which your catcher has planned. Nothing is more disheartening to a fielder than to have a ball hit through his position, which he has left in order to complete some signal play.

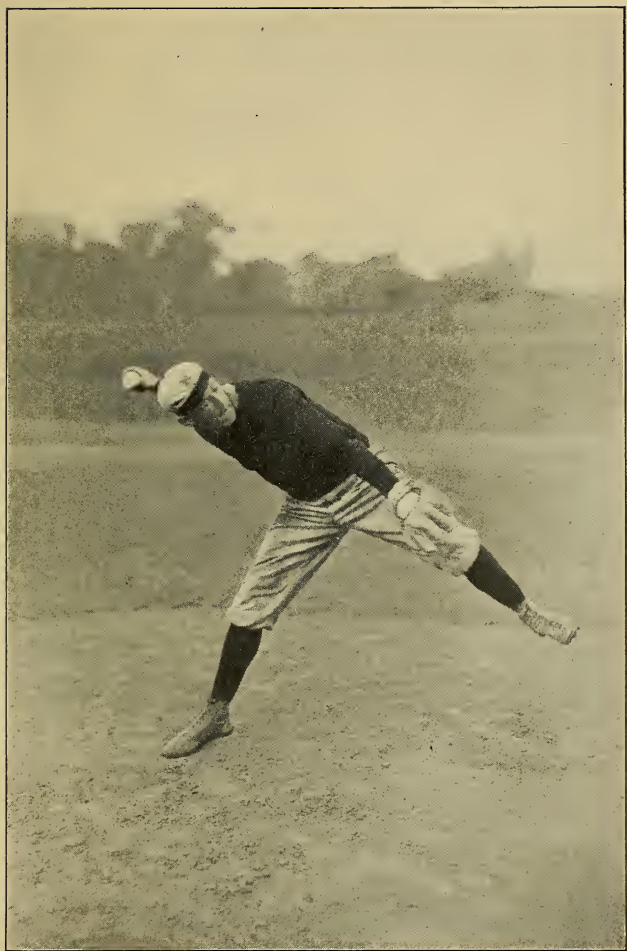
HOLDING AND THROWING THE BALL

The pitcher should hold and deliver all balls as nearly alike as possible to prevent the batter from diagnosing the delivery. For instance, if the pitcher delivers the fast ball with an over-

hand motion, he should throw his curve and slow ball the same way. If he uses the overhand delivery for his fast ball, and a side-arm motion for the curve, it won't take an opposing team long to find it out; and then they can always tell ahead of time just what to expect.

THE FAST BALL

In delivering the fast ball, grasp it firmly with the first two fingers and the thumb and let it go off the tip of the fingers. Some pitchers get the best results by placing the two fingers along the seams, each finger on a seam (where they are closest together, see illustration facing page 34); others place the two fingers across the seams; while others have success by grasping it with the fingers and thumb in almost any position. A pitcher should try these different methods and adopt the one that gives him the best results. Start this ball and deliver it either in the manner shown in illustration opposite or in the frontispiece. When delivered with a motion that is between straight overhand and side-arm, this ball, with all the power of arm and back behind it, will break a little (that is, when thrown by a right-handed pitcher to a right-handed batter, the ball bores in toward the batter). If the required speed is present, the ball will seem to hop or rise.



THE PITCHER DELIVERING AN UNDERHAND FAST BALL.

Keep this fast ball shoulder-high and as near the corners of the plate as possible, never cutting the centre of the plate unless compelled to; occasionally throwing it low—at the batter's knees. This low fast ball is very effective when alternated with the low drop-ball—using the same general delivery in each case. A pitcher who has a good fast ball which he can control is not compelled to throw many curves—only enough to unsettle the batter by letting him know that he has a variety.

THE OUT-CURVE

The preliminary motions of throwing the out-curve are the same as those of throwing the fast ball—the grip on the ball, the wind-up, and the back movement are identical in each case. But instead of letting the ball go off the tips of the fingers, as is done when throwing the fast ball, the out-curve is produced by a twist of the wrist bringing the hand across in front of the body nearly horizontally, with the back of the hand downward, spinning the ball with nearly a vertical axis, letting it go out between the thumb and the side of the index-finger. (See illustration facing page 32.)

THE DROP-CURVE

The preliminary motions of throwing this ball should be the same as those of throwing the fast

ball and out-curve. There are two methods of producing this curve.

One is the following: The ball is sent spinning with a horizontal axis by a twist of the wrist, bringing the hand directly downward—the back of the hand vertical—letting the ball go out between the thumb and side of the index-finger. (See illustration A facing this page.)

Another method of throwing the drop-curve is that of twisting the wrist and bringing the hand directly downward with the palm up, letting the ball go out between the tips of the fingers and thumb, with a snap of the wrist. (See illustration B facing this page.)

THE OUT-DROP

Use the same preliminary motions as in throwing the fast ball.

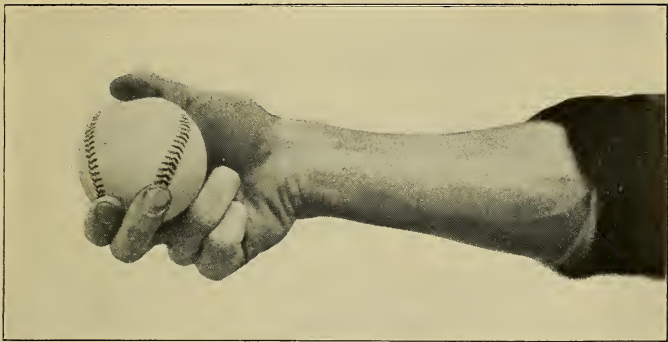
This curve should be thrown the same as the out-curve, except that instead of bringing the hand across in front horizontally, it should be swept diagonally outward and downward. (See illustration facing page 34.)

THE CHANGE OF PACE

All curve balls should not be thrown with the same speed. It is very effective to throw curves (especially drop-curves) occasionally with very



THE OUT-CURVE.



A. THE DROP-CURVE.



B. THE DROP-CURVE.

little power behind them, thus producing a slow curve—or what is known as *a change of pace*. This also is true of the straight ball.

THE SLOW BALL

This ball should be thrown with identically the same motion as the fast ball, the only difference being in the way the ball is held. There are several methods of producing the slow ball, among which the following are most common. (It is advisable to experiment with these various methods, and to adopt one only after being convinced that it will produce the best results.)

(a) Grasp the ball with the first two fingers and the thumb, pushing the ball well back into the hand against the base of the fingers and thumb. Then, in throwing the ball, remove the ends of the fingers from the ball, grasping it with the thumb and last joints of the fingers.

(b) Deliver the ball held by the thumb and last two fingers, removing the first two fingers entirely from the ball upon delivering it.

(c) Deliver the ball held in the palm of the hand by the thumb and little finger—the three middle fingers entirely removed from the ball. (See illustrations A, B, and C, facing page 36.)

In throwing the slow ball, the pitcher should avoid making a slow motion; the motion should

be as rapid and vigorous as though producing the fast or curved ball. It is only in this way that the ball can be made deceptive.

THE KNUCKLE BALL

Hold the ball in the palm of the hand, grasped by the thumb and last two fingers, with the first two fingers bent in, pressing the knuckles against the ball. (See illustration facing this page.) Some pitchers press the knuckles of the three middle fingers against the ball.

The knuckle ball is curious in that it combines the effects of the slow ball with the drop-curve and the moist ball.

It is, however, a difficult ball to control, having been mastered by but few pitchers.

THE MOIST BALL (SPIT-BALL)

Hold the ball just as it is held when throwing the fast ball, except that the fingers must rest on a smooth part of the cover (avoiding the seams)—the thumb preferably across the seams. The cover of the ball should be moistened with saliva under the ends of the first two fingers.

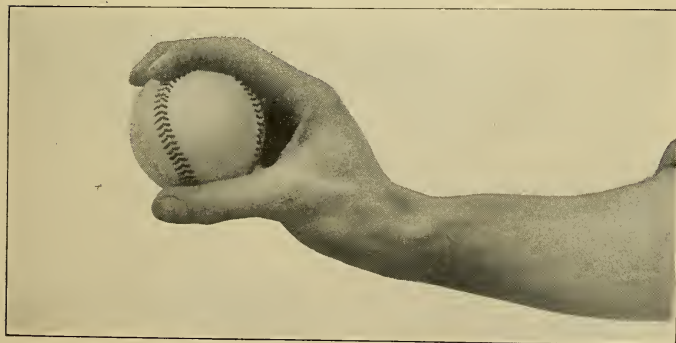
In order to obtain the best results, this ball should be thrown with considerable speed, just as the fast ball is thrown.



THE OUT-DROP.



THE KNUCKLE-BALL.



THE FAST BALL.



FIELDING THE POSITION

The pitcher, after he has thrown the ball to the batter, should at once become an infielder—and he can be a very important one. But before he does deliver the ball, he should plan what to do with the ball if it is hit to him. He should get into the habit of covering first base, home-base, and third base; and also of backing up these bases when it is necessary.

Whenever the pitcher has fielded a ball and is to throw to a base, unless the throw be a short one, he should not delay, or throw the ball slowly—a quick, true throw is the safest way to retire the runner.

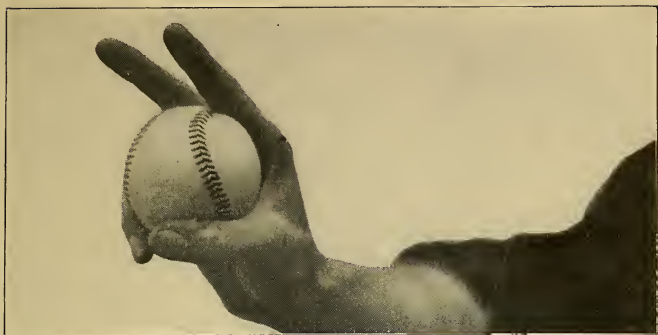
Few conditions are more fatal to a ball team than that of having weak fielding pitchers. Once let the opponents know that the “slabman” can’t handle batted balls, and immediately a shower of bunts will follow.

A great deal of practice should be put on handling batted balls of all kinds. And the most practical work can be done by having men *bunt and then run to first*. In this way the pitcher becomes accustomed to throwing on the inside of the base-line away from the path of the runner; he also gains practice in gauging the time of the throw.

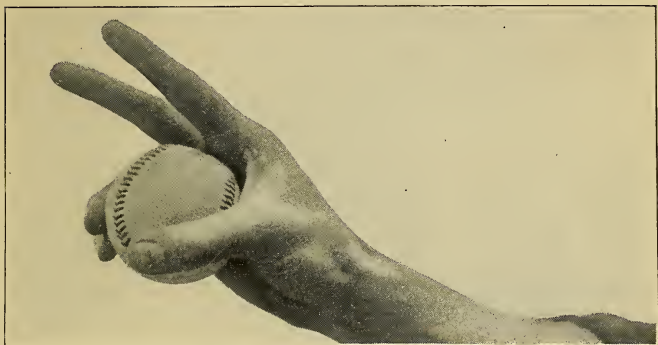
All bunts should be picked up and thrown with an *underhanded motion*. Straightening up to throw wastes too much time. Practise fielding bunts on both sides of the diamond. Start after a bunt at the crack of the bat—pick it up, one hand if necessary, and snap it to first without straightening up—*do not use any long swing with this motion*. Practise the underhand throw to first. On bunts between the pitcher and third-baseman which the third-baseman gets, the pitcher should cover third base and be ready to receive the ball in case the runner is coming from first to third, on the play.

When a bunted ball rolls between the pitcher and the catcher, if the ball can be handled better by the pitcher, he should call out "MINE"! The catcher should do the same if he can field the ball. This calling out prevents collisions.

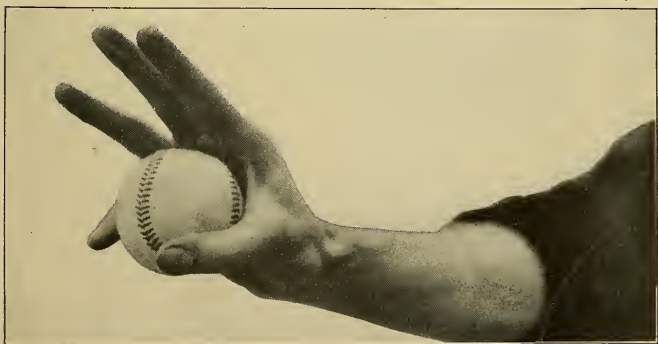
When the ball is hit to the first-base side of the diamond, if the ball is not within the pitcher's reach, *he should always cover first base*. (He is really an assistant first-baseman.) Very frequently the pitcher will have to cover first base with such speed that he cannot stop at the base but will have to overrun it. When running at top speed, it is difficult to catch the ball, touch the base, and avoid the runner all at once; therefore a great deal of practice should be put in on



A. Base of first two fingers on the ball.



B. First two fingers off the ball.



C. First three fingers off the ball.

THE SLOW BALL.



covering first and receiving the ball from the infielders. The fact that the pitcher will cover first base allows the first-baseman to cover a great deal of ground. On bunts between pitcher and first-baseman both players should be sure that either one or the other gets the ball, the other one covering. In this play if the pitcher gets the ball, he can either make the put-out himself, or toss the ball to whoever is covering first base—either the second-baseman or first-baseman. If the pitcher is unable to get the bunted ball, he should continue toward first base, to be ready to cover that base if it is necessary.

In fielding the ball to a base (with men on bases) the pitcher should always listen to his catcher, who will coach him where to throw the ball; this practice saves the pitcher the work of deciding the play himself—and of course makes it fast.

When, with second base occupied by a runner, the ball is hit safely to the outfield, and the ball is being thrown home to catch the man who is scoring from second, the pitcher should get in line with the throw at a point about thirty feet in front of the catcher. (For other methods of making this play see Diagrams II and III, pages 199 and 200.) Then if the catcher sees that he cannot handle the ball in time to retire the runner, he should call to the pitcher to intercept it; where-

upon the pitcher catches it and throws to second—retiring the base-runner there, *i. e.*, the batsman who will be running to second on the throw to the plate. (As to when to play when ball is hit past the outfielders see Diagrams IV, V, VI, and VIII, pages 200, 201, and 202.)

After a hit to an infielder, it is unnecessary to cross the line between the runner and first base. The pitcher in so doing merely uses up energy that should be reserved for pitching. If the ball is thrown poorly, the first-baseman will get it almost as quickly as the pitcher can. Indeed, in crossing the line, the pitcher is increasing the runner's chances of reaching first base; for if the pitcher blocks the runner in any way, the runner is entitled to first base. The runner knows, or should know, this, and is probably making every effort to come in contact with the pitcher.

The pitcher should cover home-base on all plays that take the catcher away from his position—such as foul flies, wild pitches, etc. (See also Diagram VIII, page 202.)

On short foul flies, the pitcher should coach his catcher; a sharp word of direction here will often help the catcher to find the ball.

The pitcher should back up third base on long hits (especially right-field hits)—not ten feet behind the base, where the ball can bound off

the baseman's glove over the pitcher's head, but fifty feet behind him, so as to be able to cover ground to the right or left.

The pitcher should never find himself standing in the middle of the diamond doing nothing while a play is going on; rather back up some place—give directions, or cover a base—be useful !

WORKING WITH HIS CATCHER

A young pitcher should rely upon the judgment of his catcher in the matter of kind of balls to throw, especially if the catcher is one of experience and has knowledge of the batters' weaknesses. But when the pitcher has had an equal amount of experience, it is a good plan for him at times to use his own judgment, since he knows better than any one else the condition of his arm, and what control he has of certain balls. Instead of shaking his head when he disagrees with the catcher, the pitcher should have some other sign whereby he can tell his catcher to call another ball: such as rubbing his shirt or tossing the ball up in the air. It is a good plan to talk things over frequently with the catcher; make note of the batters—their strong and weak points, etc.

Two heads are better than one; therefore *think with your catcher!*

THE PITCHER'S MOTION

When there is no one on base, the pitcher can use a slow motion of the arm before throwing the ball. He should acquire a long, continuous motion of the arm, bringing the back into play by leaning as far forward as possible in delivering the ball. The motion may be started as slowly as desired, but when the arm starts finally upward and forward, its motion should be accelerated, giving snap and vim to the delivery—letting the ball go when the body and arm are extended as far as possible toward the batter.

Avoid using, regularly, any jerky, half-continuous motions—as they are hard on the arm. Spare the elbow as much as is possible—that is, make your regular pitching motion with a full-arm swing, rather than a bent-arm snap.

When a base-runner is liable to steal, all wind-up motions should be discontinued—all preliminary motions used regularly in throwing to the batter must be stopped. Face the batter and extend the left foot if you are right-handed; if you are left-handed extend the right. In this position you will be ready to deliver the ball to the batter with the least possible loss of time. Very frequently catchers are blamed for allowing men to steal bases,

when in reality it is the pitcher's fault, since he was slow in making his delivery.

THROWING TO BASES

One of the tests of a good pitcher is the way he keeps the runners close to the bases. Pitchers should put a great deal of time in practising the act of holding base-runners close to their bases. It is a very common thing to see pitchers lose all control of the ball when there are men on bases. This is due almost entirely to the fact that the pitchers cannot use their long preliminary motion before throwing. It is a good plan in the early-spring play to practise on imaginary runners while pitching to batters. Look at the runner and then make the hurried delivery to the batter. Constant work at this will enable the pitcher to keep his control, speed, and curves.

To prevent having bases stolen on you, avoid all preliminary (unconscious) motions, such as shifting the feet, dropping or raising the shoulders, bending the knees, or twitching the hips, unless you take advantage of them to help you in holding base-runners close to their bases. In other words, do not get into the habit of working automatically; *e. g.*, hunching the shoulder every time before throwing to the batter, and using another motion regularly before throwing to a base. If you

hunch your shoulder regularly, before throwing to the batter, hunch your shoulder occasionally and then throw to a base. (This is taking advantage of any peculiarity of motion that you may have.) Do everything possible to prevent the base-runner from getting a running start on you. If you can perfect a deceptive delivery, do so. If the runner has a big lead off first, toss a few slow ones over to get him; then whirl and with all possible speed snap the ball low and on the inside corner of the base. Avoid throwing to first base unnecessarily. Base-runners often tire the pitcher by playing off so far that many throws are made to catch them—obtaining base on balls for the batter. In fact, the chief reason for throwing to first is not to catch the runner off the base but to hold him on, often outguessing him when he is about to steal.

When the batter has one ball and no strike, two balls and no strike, three balls and one or two strikes, then the pitcher should throw to first base. For in these conditions the pitcher is at a disadvantage (*is in the hole*), and the runner may be getting a start on a clean steal, or the hit-and-run play. (See Team Play 22.) So try to catch him leaning toward second. (Nine times out of ten the base-runner, if he has the hit-and-run signal, or intends to steal, will be “hunching” toward

second.) Practise watching the runner out of the corner of your eye. This will often help in deciding whether the throw to first is necessary.

In throwing to first base, a right-handed pitcher can use a signal with his third-baseman.

RUNNER ON FIRST BASE

When nobody is out and there is a man on first base, if the pitcher expects the batter to bunt, he should throw that ball which is hardest to bunt, namely, the high, fast ball; then he should be ready to field the ball and throw it either to first or second, according to the catcher's directions.

When there is a man on first base and *one out*, the pitcher should be ready for a clean steal—or the “hit-and-run” play.

MAN ON SECOND

The pitcher can hold the runner close to second base by working with a signal from his catcher—whereby the catcher signals to the baseman and pitcher at the same time, the latter turning and making the throw to second without first looking. (See Team Play 14.) Or he may work with his short-stop or second-baseman—using, as signal to throw, a nod of the head, closing of the hand, or some other simple movement.

It takes time to perfect this sudden turn and throw to second base; therefore the pitcher should practise it constantly until he is master of it: a right-handed pitcher should turn to the left—a left-handed pitcher to the right. He should not throw directly at the base, but a foot to that side of it nearest the baseman. This will give the baseman time to catch the ball and retire the runner without overrunning the base. For instance, if the short-stop is covering, the pitcher should throw the ball to the left-field side of second base—and vice versa if the second-baseman is covering—*i. e.*, on the right-field side of second base. This play will catch many a runner napping.

Whenever the short-stop bluffs the base-runner back toward second (without any signal for a throw from the pitcher), the pitcher should be ready to make his delivery to the batter. For when the short-stop starts for second, the runner will do the same, and if the pitcher delivers the ball to the batter, the runner will be headed back to second—thus being prevented from stealing, and slowed up on scoring in case of a hit.

When there is a man on second—and none out—if the pitcher expects a bunt, occasionally, as the short-stop runs the man back to second, he can put the ball right over the base, that it may be bunted—and then he can run in, get the ball,

and retire the man at third—working with the first-baseman, who also comes in.

Since the pitcher is allowed to make motions to second without throwing the ball there, it is a good plan to develop some slight motion toward second to drive the runner back to that base before delivering the ball to the batter. This motion need be nothing more than a quick look at second while drawing the arm back to throw to the batter.

When there is a man on second—the pitcher should help the third-baseman by going sharply after balls to the right—and retiring the man at third. Otherwise, if the third-baseman has to field them, third base is generally left unprotected and the runner reaches there safely from second.

RUNNER ON SECOND

When there is a man on second base and the ball is hit sharply to you, there are three ways in which you can play the man on second. One is to drive him back to second by a quick motion—then whirling and throwing the batter out at first. Another play occurs when, as you turn toward second, the runner stops between second and third—your play here is to run directly toward him—preferably driving him back toward second and making the “put-out” there. The other

play is to throw to third if the runner attempts to go to that base when the ball is hit to you. *Always remember what bases are occupied and by whom, and how many are out!*

RUNNER ON THIRD

One or none out. When there is a man on third—and the ball is hit sharply to you—you should retire the runner on third when it is possible, or drive him back to third before throwing the batter out at first.

RUNNER ON FIRST AND THIRD

If the man on first starts for second on your delivery, be prepared to receive the ball from the catcher. If he does throw the ball at you, catch it—and be ready to throw it home instantly (if the runner is scoring); or if you can't play the man on third—whirl and throw to second; frequently you can catch the man coming from first. This play to be successful demands instantaneous action—and accurate and speedy throwing. (A great deal of practice is necessary before the average pitcher can handle this fast ball and make the play correctly.)

RUNNER ON FIRST AND THIRD

If, while you have the ball in your hand, the man on first starts for second, whirl immediately,

turning toward third base, and noting what the runner there is doing. He may be starting for home as the runner leaves first—or he may be playing off the base ready to go home as you throw to second. So drive the man back to third, and snap the ball to second. If you can catch the runner off third, do so.

BREAKING UP THE SQUEEZE PLAY

Runner on third. (Second and third—or first, second, and third.) In any of these positions the pitcher should watch for an attempted “squeeze play” and be prepared to break it up. (See Team Play 23.) In order to do this, take your wind-up motion slowly—all the while watching the runner on third base. Often he will start for home before you have begun the final motion in delivering the ball. In this case, if the fast ball is called, you can either throw the ball high and wide (out of the batter’s reach) or directly over the batter’s head. In the former case, he will usually be unable to bunt safely; in the latter, he will think only of getting out of the way of the ball. If the curve is called, break it wide—out of the batter’s reach.

A FEW GENERAL PITCHING HINTS

The most successful curve is the out-drop, because it curves outward and downward; and therefore is difficult to hit squarely.

The slow ball is something every pitcher should have if he would be successful. Nothing worries a good batter so much as to face a pitcher who is known to have a good slow ball to mix with his fast one. Remember, however, to use the slow ball *very seldom against a weak hitter*; it is the good hitter against whom it works most successfully.

The slow ball is the most difficult of all deliveries to master, but its effectiveness is well worth any amount of time spent on it. This ball is most difficult to hit when thrown across the base in the neighborhood of the batter's knees; then there is a tendency for the batter to hit on top of it, driving it weakly on the ground. It is only after a careful study of the batters that the pitcher can know when to use the slow ball. Usually batters who take long swings at the ball have difficulty in hitting it.

Pitching, from beginning to end, involves the pitcher and the batter in a battle of wits. The pitcher should so vary the kind of balls he throws that the batter cannot guess successfully what is

coming. A thoughtful batter, knowing that the pitcher has a good assortment, will generally expect different kinds of balls to be thrown. The pitcher, therefore, may at times throw three fast balls or three curves in succession; thereby outwitting the batter. Or he may use other combinations; such as an alternation of fast ball and curve; or two fast balls and a slow ball; or two curves and a fast ball; or two curves and a slow ball—anything to prevent the batters from discovering regularity in the pitcher's delivery.

A good pitcher will always try to put the batter "in the hole"; that is, at the disadvantage of having more strikes than balls against him. Then the pitcher can afford to make the batter hit at balls that are not good. Here again, however, the pitcher may outwit the batter by throwing a perfectly good strike when the latter is expecting a curve or other ball away from the plate. This is called "slipping one over."

Do not be afraid to give a batter four balls, if by doing so (without forcing in a run) you can get rid of a good hitter to bring up a poor one. In fact, this is sometimes the best thing to do, if the batter has the advantage in balls and strikes, when the man who would make the winning run is on second or third. In this case, make the batter hit a bad ball, or give him a base on balls; then

work hard to get the advantage over the next batter, preventing him from hitting safely.

If you find that you are having trouble controlling the ball from your regular place on the rubber, shift your feet a little to either side. This may help you to regain your control.

If your fast ball persists in carrying in close to the batter, move your catcher out a bit.

The moist ball (or spit-ball) is one of the late innovations into the game, and has helped to insure many a pitcher who is without a good curve ball his position on the team. Many pitchers use this ball, but few of them rank as first class. If you are fortunate enough to possess speed and good curves, avoid using the moist ball, as it is very hard on the arm (and the majority of clubs prefer the other class of pitchers).

Work especially hard to retire the first batter every inning.

Remember what bases are occupied by runners, and who these runners are—whether they are fast or slow. This will help you in deciding where to play the ball if it is hit to you.

Do not get yourself into difficulty by throwing balls to the batter—your infield and outfield are there to help you; and they would much rather see the opposing team hit the ball than walk to first base.

Inspire your team by your actions of confidence and judgment; then they will work harder and better behind you. Figure every possibility as the batter takes his position in the box.

If your men are making errors behind you, do not become discouraged or show resentment; this is a time when you must control yourself and the ball in such a way as to pull your team together. A team cannot win consistently if its pitchers lack courage; therefore, when you take your position on the mound, resolve that, no matter how great the odds may be against you, you will never lose your nerve.

Pay no attention to remarks addressed to you by the opposing players or the spectators; they are likely to say various things merely to disconcert you. You must remain cool and thoughtful all through the game, no matter how wild the excitement may run among the spectators.

Before pitching to each batter, be sure that your fielders are all placed properly.

Do not become careless when there is a weak hitter at bat; he wouldn't be in the ball game if he couldn't hit at times.

If any unusual delay occurs while the game is in progress, do not stand idly by. Select your first-baseman or any other handy player, and throw the ball to him, thereby keeping your arm warm until the game is resumed.

Toward the end of the game, when you are ahead—no matter how much—do not assume that the game is won and become careless. Continue to use your head, and control the ball.

Do not be unwilling to take advice from your fellow players during the game or at any other time. Many heads are better than one.

A little plaster of Paris powder, or powdered chalk, carried in the hip pocket, may come in handy on wet days to rub on the ball.

Remember that, to be at your best and to have a long life in baseball, you must keep good hours and avoid all excesses.

III

THE FIRST-BASEMAN

FOOTWORK

Accustom the feet to feel for the base. Before receiving a thrown ball, stand just inside of the diamond with feet spread on each side of the base; then when the ball is thrown, shift in the direction of the ball. If it comes to the right, extend the right foot—hooking the base with the left; if it comes to the left, extend the left foot—hooking the base with the right. Practise this constantly.

The first-baseman should never cross his feet; that is, extend the left foot when reaching to the right, and vice versa. (See illustration facing page 54.) By so doing, the reach is shortened and the position is made very awkward.

Never remain on the base when the ball has been thrown too wide to be handled. You can do nothing without the ball; therefore, leave the base and take a chance on touching the runner or getting back to the base ahead of him.

In handling low-thrown balls (pick-ups), the first-baseman should reach forward as far as pos-

sible, keeping one foot against the base, trusting that if the ball gets away from his hands it will be blocked by his body. Keeping the foot against the base and judging how far you can reach requires a great deal of practice. Do not turn the head away from the ball, for in so doing it is impossible to follow the bound.

WORKING WITH THE PITCHER

The success of a first-baseman depends to a great extent upon the amount of ground he can cover. And in order that he may cover ground, he must know that the pitcher is ready at all times to go to first base. *The first-baseman should constantly coach the pitcher to take the base on all balls hit to the first-baseman.* Knowing that the pitcher will take first, he can play well back and cover ground to the right and left.

In making a play to first base when the pitcher is covering that base, it is absolutely necessary to toss the ball to him. Keep the ball well in the air and ahead of the pitcher as he runs to the base—this enables him to get the location of the base and catch the ball at the same time—all the while going at full speed. A fast thrown ball, on this play, either gets away from the pitcher because he hasn't time to cover it, if it is over the base, or it slows him up, since he has to



Correct position for receiving ball from infield.



Incorrect way of touching first when receiving ball (getting legs crossed).

FIRST-BASEMAN'S FOOTWORK.

stop in order to catch the ball. When it is possible, toss the ball so that the pitcher receives it just before reaching the base.

CATCHING THROWN BALLS

The first-baseman should be adept at catching the ball with the gloved hand alone, as well as with both hands. He is constantly being forced to handle bad throws, and since he can reach much farther with one hand than he can with two, it is essential that he cling to the ball whenever he gets one hand on it. Practise catching with the gloved hand alone. But never use *one* hand when you can get *both* on the ball!

When there is a fast man coming down the baseline from home, stretch out as far as you can to meet the ball; by so doing, you will receive the ball sooner. Many base-runners who otherwise would be safe are declared out when the play is made this way.

It is well to get into the habit in practice of calling for the ball on the inside of the diamond out of the path of the runner. But a first-baseman should not be afraid of reaching right in front of a base-runner to get the ball; then, no matter what happens—hold the ball!

After receiving a thrown ball from the infield, the first-baseman should instantly shift into a

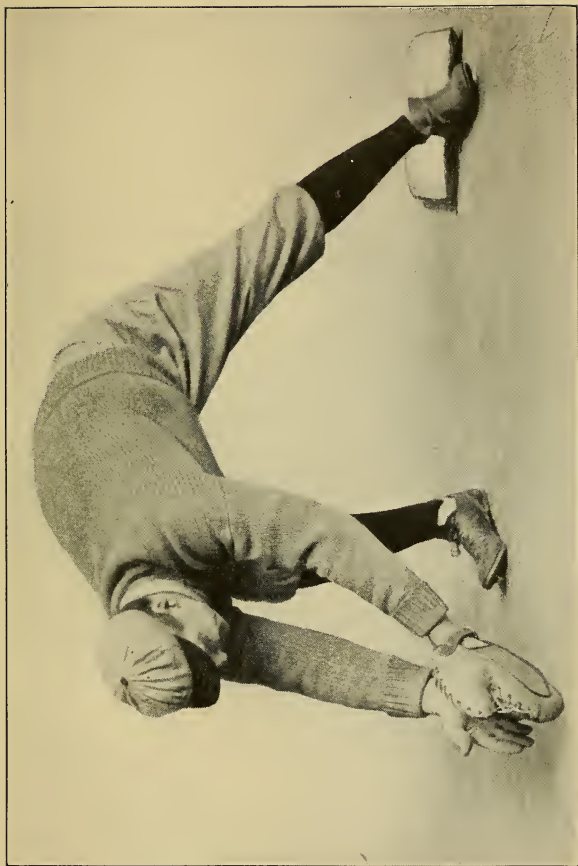
throwing position—watching the other base-runners. A second lost will often enable a clever base-runner to steal a base.

TAGGING THE RUNNER

The first-baseman should develop a sharp, swift motion in putting the ball on the runner as he comes back to the base. Always reach low—and sweep the ball on the runner just in front of the base. When it is possible, especially with a runner caught between first base and second base, meet the runner a few feet from the base, but be sure he can't slide under the ball. Do not try to pound the runner hard with the ball—the ball might bound out of your hands—a swift, light touch takes less time and is safer.

THE QUESTION OF CHOOSING A RIGHT OR LEFT HANDED THROWER

In only one particular has a left-handed first baseman the advantage over a right-handed man; and that is in throwing to second base to make double plays. When he gets the ball he is in a natural position to throw to second base; while the right-handed man is compelled to make almost a complete turn before he is in a position to throw to that base. Therefore, other things being equal,



CORRECT WAY OF FIELDING A LOW-THROWN BALL (PICK-UP) AT FIRST.

the first consideration governing the choice would be the players' batting ability.

FIELDING THE POSITION

The distance from first base that the fielder should play can only be determined by the individual himself. The rule is to cover as much ground as possible—safely. A moderate distance when playing back—to be varied by the ability of the individual player—is a position eight paces from the base along the base-line, and eight paces perpendicularly back. (See Diagram IX, page 203.) On natural right-field hitters, play over toward the foul line—as hits in that territory are generally good for two bases. On all other batters, take your regular position—playing as far outside of the diamond as possible (that is, of course, when you are not holding the runner on the base).

The first-baseman should perfect himself in handling batted ground balls; he should be sure at least to get his body in front of the ball and block it—trusting to be able to pick the ball up and beat the runner to the base—or that the pitcher will run over and cover first. On slow balls, he should run in swiftly, get the ball (with one hand if necessary), whirl, and snap it to first—always remembering to tell the pitcher to take

first base. If the ball is one which both the pitcher and first-baseman try for—of course the second-baseman should go to first base—short-stop naturally swinging over to cover second base, there being nothing else for him to do. The first-baseman should try to get all fly balls in his vicinity—especially those between him and the catcher—as he gets a better start after the ball, knowing just where it is, while the catcher pauses momentarily to locate it. (This is especially true if the sun is in the catcher's eyes.) It is generally safer for the first-baseman to take fly balls that come down on his side of the diamond near the pitcher. It is well not to go over very far toward the second-baseman—as he generally has an easy time covering ground on fly balls; but the first-baseman should start fast and try for all pop-flies out in right field behind him. (See “Second-Baseman” on fly balls.)

In taking your position in the field, always be sure that the base is inside the diamond, for if any part of it is hit while on foul ground, the hit is fair.

BACKING UP BASES

When the ball is being thrown home from the outfield, the first baseman can play in either of the two ways indicated in Diagram II, page 199. He should get back of the catcher at a distance of

forty feet—alert and ready to stop overthrows, etc.—returning the ball to the infield wherever the play demands it or take a position in the infield. (See Diagrams IV, V, VI and VII, pages 200–202.)

RUNNER ON FIRST BASE

When there is a runner on first base only, the first-baseman should always remain on his base to prevent the runner from getting a large lead. (There is one exception to this rule, viz.: In the last inning, if his side is three or more runs ahead, the first-baseman should leave his base and play back, paying attention only to the batter, as the one run won't affect the score materially.)

Stand over the base, feet astride, giving the runner room to slide back to the base behind your right foot. Be on the alert for a throw from the pitcher. Always watch the ball.

None out. Be ready to handle a bunted ball. (The batter may bunt according to Team Plays 19 a, b, c.)

If the ball is bunted, go in toward the batter with all possible speed. Start the instant you divine that he will bunt. (By watching closely the arm motions of the batter, you can frequently tell when he is about to bunt.) If it is a slow bunt, play the ball to first base, as it will be impossible to retire the runner at second. But if it

is a ball that comes at you rather fast, whirl and head the man off at second.

On balls other than bunts, also use your judgment in playing the ball. If you think that you have time to get the runner at second, throw the ball there—otherwise play it to first base. (A word from one of your own players will often help you in deciding this play.) Always keep in mind the speed of the batter and base-runner.

One out. Hold the runner close to the base to prevent him from getting a start. Here he may be going to attempt to steal, or work the hit-and-run play. You may, therefore, expect frequent throws from the pitcher, who should be working to break up any contemplated play.

As the pitcher delivers the ball to the batter, go out into the diamond to cover more ground. It is necessary to remain on the base only as long as the pitcher might throw there; after that, leave the base and go out where you can be of service fielding the ball.

When the ball is hit to you, if possible, retire the runner going to second base (starting a double play); then go back to your base to complete the play. (The act of making the double play successfully requires great speed and accuracy; therefore, you should spend much time in prac-

tising it.) If the runner going to second is out of the question, retire the runner at first—either by playing him yourself or by tossing the ball to the pitcher or second-baseman, who may be covering the base.

Whenever the base-runner starts to steal, the first-baseman should call out to his catcher, "There he goes!" (or some other similar direction). This will enable the catcher to keep his eye on second base while throwing—instead of being compelled to watch the runner.

Two out. Hold the runner up; and play to retire the batter at first base.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

See Team Play 13.

When one is out, play half your regular distance back of, and away from, your base. The fact that you do this will enable you to cover more ground and will not permit the runner to take any larger lead than if you were on the base. If he persists in taking a large lead, you can frequently retire him by a throw from the catcher. (See Team Play 17.)

When two are out, leave your base, and play your regular distance back—just as though there were no runner on base. The pitcher will cover first base on all balls hit to you. The fact that

second base is occupied prevents the base-runner from stealing. (As a rule, they won't attempt a double steal when two are out.) If the runner takes a large lead, drive him back by the use of Team Play 17.

RUNNERS ON FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD

See Team Plays 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD

See Team Plays 6, 7, 8, 9.

RUNNERS ON SECOND AND THIRD

See Team Plays 10 and 11.

RUNNER ON THIRD

See Team Play 12.

Always, as the batter takes his position in the box, decide what you will do with the ball if it is hit to you!

IV

THE SECOND-BASEMAN

GENERAL FIELDING HINTS

Your regular position should be as far back and away from second base as your speed and general ability will permit. This position should also be determined in connection with the batter's speed, hitting ability, etc. (See Diagrams IX, X, and XI, pages 203 and 204.)

On all fly balls hit into your territory, start for them immediately, calling out as you start (this will prevent collisions with other fielders). Learn by practice how much ground you can cover toward centre field, right field, and behind the first-baseman toward the foul-line.

Always judge the wind! If it is blowing out with the ball, your opportunity of catching the ball is decreased; while if it is blowing in from the outfield, against the ball, and, as it were, holding the ball up, you will be greatly assisted in covering ground and catching the ball. Remember, therefore, to ascertain when you take your position on the field just how the wind blows. Of course,

nothing can be done with that "thorn in the side," The Texas Leaguer—(a little fly ball just out of reach of both outfielders and infielders).

On a base-hit to right field, don't chase the ball out into the field—the right-fielder can handle it; go to second base and receive the ball from the fielder. (The short-stop should back you up on this play.) On a base-hit to left field, back up the short-stop, who covers second on the throw-in.

With a runner on second base, when base-hits are made to the outfield, play as directed in Diagrams II and III, pages 199 and 200.

On long hits to right field for two or more bases, in which it is necessary to relay the ball in, go out into the field and back up the fielder who is to "make the throw" into the diamond. Coach this man where to throw upon receiving the ball. With your assistance he can turn and throw without a second's loss—and this often means the preventing of runs being made. (Study Diagrams VI and VII, pages 201 and 202.)

On all slow hits, go in fast, and throw to first base underhanded; for by straightening up to throw you lose time, and the runner may beat your throw to first base—especially if he is a fast runner or left-handed batter. (Left-handed batters always get away from the plate faster than right-handed men.) On some left-handed batters

—fast men—you will be compelled to play in closer to protect against just such a play. Since, by studying the batter, you will know his speed and peculiarities, your own judgment will help you a great deal here.

Hard-hit balls should be blocked or “knocked down.” Never let the fumbling of such a ball worry you, for the ball generally hits your hands before the runner is fifteen feet from the plate. Recover the ball as quickly as possible and throw it to first by a sharp, underhanded snap. *Never take your eye off a fumbled ball*; get it securely in the hand before attempting to throw it. In other words, *don’t look at the base-runner while trying to pick up the ball*. If you do, you will find yourself making three or four attempts to get hold of it—and by that time the runner will be over first base. As you can do nothing without the ball, remember to keep your eyes on it until you have it in your hand.

On hits that you field close to first base, toss or pitch the ball to the first-baseman; he can handle this kind of a ball better than one snapped hard at him. When the pitcher is covering first base, and you have fielded the ball near him, toss the ball to him in the same way—for he will be compelled to run, catch the ball, and touch the base all at the same time. The conditions of making

these plays should be governed by the amount of time at your disposal, the speed of the ball and runner, etc.

GETTING THE CATCHER'S SIGNALS

Be sure to understand and get the catcher's signals (see catcher's signals, Team Play 29), as they will help you in covering ground intelligently. For instance: let us assume that the catcher's signal to the pitcher for a fast ball is one finger, and for a curve two fingers—and that there is a right-handed batter who is a free hitter at the plate. Now, suppose you are playing your regular position, and you see the catcher put down one finger—you know it calls for a fast ball—and this ball will very probably be hit in your direction. If, however, on this play the batter is a certain left-field hitter, play a little closer to second base—all the while ready to cover ground to your left also. And on a free hitter, if the catcher should put down two fingers (calling for a curve) the ball will more than likely be hit to the short-stop. When there is a left-handed batter at the plate, of course these conditions of play would be just reversed: upon getting the catcher's signals, reverse them, *i. e.*, the curved ball would probably be hit in your direction, and the fast ball to the left-field side.

Yet be ready to cover ground toward second base on the fast-ball signal. After you have got the catcher's signal, do not shift your position before the ball is pitched, as that would inform the batsman of the play; you may expect a dead right-field hitter to hit nearly all balls in your direction.

PASSING THE CATCHER'S SIGNALS TO THE OUTFIELD

The second-baseman, by getting the catcher's signals, can not only increase his own efficiency in covering ground but can assist the outfielders by passing these same signals out to them. It is easy for the second-baseman to get the catcher's signs (signals), but it is impossible for the outfielders to get them; therefore the second-baseman should pass the signals out to the fielders, so that they can know whether a curve or a fast ball is being pitched.

A simple method of doing this may clarify the point: when you see the fast ball (one finger) called by the catcher, place the right hand behind your back with the hand closed; when the curved ball has been called (two fingers) place the right hand behind your back—open. The same hand should be used in giving these signals, otherwise the opposing batsmen will soon be able to distinguish between signals—and will know

what ball is coming each time. By playing according to signals in this way, both the infield and outfield can cover more ground—with a greater degree of certainty.

PROTECTING THE WEAK SIDE

If a fielder is weak on covering ground, either to the right or left side, he should protect that side, *e. g.*, if a second-baseman has difficulty fielding balls on his right, he should play a little toward second base. However, try for every hit ball that comes your way—and try hard—don't be afraid of making errors. All good fielders (ground coverers) make errors, because they "go after everything in sight"—and in so doing they knock down many balls that would have meant runs. Accustom yourself to using the gloved hand freely, but never use *one* hand to stop or catch a ball if *two* can be used to do the same work.

WHEN THERE IS A RUNNER ON FIRST BASE AND NONE OUT

In this case the batter may bunt the ball. (See Team Plays 19 *a, b, c.*) The second-baseman, if he assumes that the batter will bunt, should take his position a few paces back of the base-line and directly between the first-baseman and pitcher. From this point he can recover any hard-bunted

balls that go between the first-baseman and pitcher. In this position, however (a fast ball having been called for), if, when you are expecting the batter to bunt, he should switch the play to a hit and run, and bunt the ball past the pitcher on the short-stop side, it is doubtful whether either runner could be retired. The short-stop on this play will be going over to cover second base, and when the ball is hit in his direction will pull up and try to get the ball—then it is up to you at least to try to cover second. The batter and base-runner are likely to work a “hit-and-run play” when no one is out; be on the alert. (See Team Play 22.)

Another play for the second-baseman to make is that of covering first base—from the position mentioned above—to receive the ball from the first-baseman, who goes in toward the plate to cover bunts. Again, on this play, if the ball is recovered by the pitcher, it will be difficult for the first-baseman to get back to the base; therefore, the second-baseman should take first. The third-baseman may sometimes handle a bunt and throw the ball to first before the first-baseman can get back; here again the second-baseman takes first. Of course, if the first-baseman can get back in time to take the ball, let him do so. In these plays do not leave your position until the ball has been hit.

Frequently second-basemen start to cover first base too soon in this play—leaving the position open through which the ball, after being bunted hard past the pitcher, will roll—allowing both men to be safe. The same instructions about leaving your position should apply when the opposing team is making the hit-and-run play or when a man is stealing second. Try *not to leave your position to cover second until the ball is in the catcher's hands*. By studying and playing according to the catcher's signals, knowing the batter, and playing accordingly, you should never be caught napping.

Another play that the second-baseman can make, with a man on first and nobody out, is the following (Team Play 18): As the first-baseman goes in toward home to cover the bunt, naturally the base is left unguarded—and the runner will play away off. By a prearranged signal with the catcher (who calls a waste ball from the pitcher), the second-baseman can slip over behind the base-runner and take the throw from the catcher—to retire the runner—since the latter will be leaning toward second if expecting the bunt.

MAKING THE DOUBLE PLAY

One of the most important functions of the short-stop and second-baseman is that of making

the double play at second and first. The play requires the utmost swiftness of action, and ability to catch and throw the ball under the most difficult conditions. The short-stop and second-baseman should continually practise making this play with all possible speed. It is the throw from second to first that demands the greatest speed—since the batter is allowed considerable time, while the ball is being caught and thrown to second. Therefore, practise catching the ball, tagging the base, and throwing to first with a runner going to second.

A RUNNER ON FIRST BASE

One out. In this case, the second-baseman should be ready to cover second base on an attempted “steal.” Now the question comes up again, “who will cover second base, the second-baseman or the short-stop?” And again the catcher’s signals and a knowledge of the batter come to your assistance. On all “*free hitters*” (batters who are likely to hit into any field), and on all batters whose hitting tendencies you do not know, you should cover second to take the throw according to what ball is pitched to the batter. When, on a right-handed batter, you see the signal for the fast ball—you remain in your position, because that kind of a ball is very apt to be hit in your

direction (and the short-stop will cover second). The short-stop would cover second also on all waste balls (pitch-outs) to a right-handed batter. If on this same batter (right-handed) the curved ball is called, the second-baseman should cover the base to retire the runner, while the short-stop remains in his position to protect that side of the diamond, since the curved ball will generally be hit to left field.

But the above conditions change somewhat when the batter is known to be a dead left-field hitter—that is, one who pulls every ball (or nearly every one) around into left field. Against this batter, the second-baseman would cover second base on all pitched balls. If the pitcher's control enables him, by keeping the ball away from the batter, to make the batter hit into his weak field—the second-baseman should not only be ready to cover second base if the runner steals, but to field the ball if it is hit into his territory. Therefore, know and study your pitchers and opposing batsmen.

On a left-handed batter, the conditions change again. If he is a free hitter play him just the reverse on the catcher's signals—when the man is stealing second. For example, on the fast-ball signal you (second-baseman) would cover second to take the throw. On the curved-ball signal,

the second-baseman would remain in his position while the short-stop covered second.

If the batter is a dead right-field hitter—the short-stop should cover second on all thrown balls. It is quite plain from the above that there should be no guesswork about covering second base; it is all done according to signals and a knowledge of the batters. Of course there will be times when the ball is hit exactly contrary to expectations—but the above system is in accordance with the laws of probability—and will be found to be reliable.

With first occupied and a steal expected, play a few paces nearer second to enable you to receive the ball from the catcher. On pitch-out signs—when you are to cover, you should be able to leave your position ahead of time to take the throw. But under all other conditions you must keep your position as long as possible.

Watching for the drag-hit. (This hit is so called because the batter—usually a fast left-hander—makes more than a bunt of the hit, giving it just enough force to get it past the pitcher—toward the second-baseman.) If this ball is successfully placed toward the second-baseman, and if the latter is playing a deep position, the runner may beat the ball to first base. Therefore, when playing against a batter who is known to make that

play, move in toward the base-line far enough to command the situation—judging the batter's speed and your own ability to come in and shoot the ball underhanded to first base.

POSITION OF BASEMAN'S FEET IN COVERING SECOND BASE

In taking throws from the catcher while a man is stealing do not worry about the position of your feet; that should be the last consideration. The first and most important thing is *to get the ball*. If the throw is perfect, permitting you to place yourself so that the runner must slide to you—all well and good; but remember that position is nothing if you don't have the ball.

A great deal of practice is necessary to enable a second-baseman (or short-stop) to be able to put the runner out, stealing. Be sure to get the ball *first*, using two hands when possible—then tag the runner. Catch the ball and sweep it down on the runner—all in one motion; touch the runner lightly with the ball—if you try to pound him with it, the chances are that you will drop the ball. Do not let the runner coming at you make you nervous, don't worry about his spikes—watch the ball—and out of the corner of your eye you can see the runner well enough to enable you to play correctly. When the play is at all close, put the

ball speedily down in front of the base, thus compelling the runner to slide into it.

RUNNER ON FIRST BASE

Two out. Play back well, but a little nearer second base. However, always play according to the batter's habit of hitting—and the catcher's signals. With the knowledge thus gained, and knowing that with two out the runner will very probably attempt to steal (unless he is three or four runs behind), you may greatly facilitate matters.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

None out. Here again you must watch for the sacrifice bunt—especially if the opposing club wants one or two runs badly. (Read Team Plays 19 *f, g, h, i.*) Play as directed with first occupied and none out—a little nearer first base, where you can cover first base if the first-baseman goes in to get the bunt. Always study the hitter's motion with his bat—he will generally reveal to you by some little motion the fact that he will bunt. Then, as soon as you see that he intends to bunt, start quickly for the ball—but be ready to stop and cover first if the ball can be handled by the first-baseman or pitcher. Three men around the

ball and nobody covering the base is a common condition when the ball is hit rather slowly between first and second bases. So cover first base if the other men can field the ball.

One out. Hold the runner on second base as closely as possible; do not let him take a big lead. Run toward second base as though to catch the ball thrown there by the pitcher. But do not leave your position while the pitcher is delivering the ball to the batter—the ball might be hit through your territory. By a prearranged signal with the pitcher, you can sometimes catch the runner napping. (See Team Play 14.) Play your usual position, according to who is batting—always being on the alert for fast left-handed batters. Watch the catcher's signals. If, as the ball is hit hard at you, you field it cleanly, throw it to second base; *but if you fumble, throw to first base.* In tossing or throwing the ball to the short-stop on double plays, throw it so that the fielder receives it on the inside of the base (within the diamond); he can then throw unobstructed to first. And in attempting a double play, be sure to retire the first man, *anyway!*

If, as the hit-and-run is being played, the ball is hit to your left, play it to first base; for the runner will have got such a start off first that it will be difficult to catch him at second. Slow

balls should be thrown to first base, as doubles are out of the question.

If the ball is hit at you in such a way that you catch it ahead of the runner on first (who will be on his way to second) touch him, and throw to first base, making a double play. If the runner should stop between the bases, preventing you from touching him, run him back toward first, then throw to first, retiring the batter, and leaving the runner to be caught between first and second.

Whenever you have a man caught between bases, always drive him back toward the base from which he came. If he is between first and second, make the put-out at first. Do not permit the base-runner to take a big lead off the base.

RUNNER ON SECOND

None out. Play in for the sacrifice bunt (if you calculate that he will attempt it). (See Team Plays 19 *d* and *e*.) If the ball be hit to you, the play is generally to retire the runner at first.

One out. The runner is very apt to steal third, so help the short-stop to keep him close to the base by feinting to take the ball from the pitcher. Be careful, however, of leaving your position open, especially if the batter be a right-field hitter. Occasionally it is advisable, if the runner plays

off a great distance, to work a signal with the pitcher (through the catcher) and catch the runner off the base. (See Team Play 14.) Study your batter.

Two out. Play deep—and get the batter at first base—always! For conditions of play with:

Man on third base, see Team Play 12.

Man on second and third bases, see Team Plays 10 and 11.

Man on first, second, and third bases, see Team Plays 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Man on first and third bases, see Team Plays 6, 7, 8, and 9.

Be prepared for the double steal—that is, the man on third scoring while the man on first goes to second. In order to prevent the opponents from making this play successfully the second-baseman should cut in ten or fifteen feet in front of second base—and if the man is going home intercept the ball and throw it home; if he is not going home, let the ball go to short-stop who is covering second. On this play the second-baseman has everything in front of him—he can see the ball and the runner on third. Sometimes the man at third will make a feint to go home—stopping when about fifteen feet off the base. In this case the second-baseman can snap the ball to third, catching the runner off the base.

If the ball thrown by the catcher is thrown at such a height that, in your opinion, it will not go to second, catch it whether the man starts from third or not—as the low throw will hit the ground and probably get away from the short-stop—letting the man score from third—and placing the runner from first on third. By practising this play, you will soon become able to judge whether the ball will carry to second or not.

The breaking up of this “double steal” can be accomplished best when the “pitch-out” (waste-ball) signal is given. Then the positions may be left open with less danger of being hit through.

When no “pitch-out” sign is given—the second-baseman (and short-stop) should play a bit nearer the base and the line—not leaving this position until the ball is either hit or in the catcher’s hands.

Always, as the batter takes his position in the box, you should decide what you will do with the ball if it is hit to you.

V

THE SHORT-STOP

Many points relative to the short-stop have been covered in the chapter on the second-baseman—they will be referred to in this chapter.

The first thing you should do when you arrive on the field before a game is to note how the wind is blowing. The wind will at times enable you to catch many a fly ball that you would not even try for ordinarily. Play the ball in a high wind according to the same instructions given to the second-baseman on fly ball.

Learn to “get the ball away” fast and true—overhanded when you have time (on a hard-hit ball) and underhanded when you are hurried. Proficiency in this latter throw, especially to first base, requires diligent practice.

Learn to use your gloved hand alone on balls that you see it is impossible to get two hands on. Don't be afraid of errors. Try for everything—many a game has been saved by a “wild lunge,” as it is called—whereby a player has actually hurled himself at a ball, catching it almost miraculously.

The majority of infielders have what is called a weak side; that is, there is one side, right or left, on which it is difficult for them to cover ground successfully. Players can overcome this weakness somewhat by having the ball batted on their weak side constantly in practice. (Young players should pay particular attention to developing their ability to cover ground on both sides.)

Make a study of the batters. Note what kinds of balls they hit, where they generally hit—whether they are free hitters, or whether they are dead right or left field hitters. Remember the speed of the various players—this will enable you to regulate the speed with which you must make your plays. Little things are happening constantly, which, if remembered, will give you a very valuable knowledge of the players whom you are to meet day after day.

Cover third on all “hit-and-run” plays when the third-baseman goes in for batted or bunted balls. You can be of no use remaining in your position when the ball is bunted or hit toward third. So either back up the play (on a ball that you can recover if the third-baseman misses it) or cover third. Don’t worry about second—as the second-baseman naturally swings around to cover that base when the ball is hit to your side of the diamond. When you attempt anything

in the way of fielding GET STARTED QUICKLY—*it is the fractions of seconds in time that make worlds of difference in baseball.*

When you have a runner caught between second and third, run him back to second and make the put-out there—in fact, *always run a base-runner back to the base from which he came*, trying to have him put out at that base. If he is not put out, he will at least have been prevented from getting the extra base. Start quickly and get in front of hard-hit balls; learn to play them with your hands, not with your feet or body—this can be accomplished only by judging the bounds. (Get into the habit of catching grounders on good bounds—that is, playing the ball—otherwise “the ball plays you.”) When you have handled the ball cleanly there will be little difficulty in throwing the man out at first; but if you fumble the ball, you must be speedy in getting the ball to first to retire the man. Remember that you must play faster on a left-handed batter than on a right-handed one.

Come in rapidly on all balls that are hit slowly in your territory; play them with all possible speed—using the underhanded throw. Frequently you will be compelled to play the slow ball with the bare hand, picking it up and throwing it while on the dead run; this should be prac-

tised until it is not difficult to do. It is well in practice to try all ways of catching the ball. *But in a game never use one hand when you can get both on the ball.*

Go after all fly balls, learning by constant trying how far you can go for them. When you go after a ball and see that you can get it—avoid collisions by calling loudly: "MINE!"

Go after everything! Don't be afraid of making errors. (A manager, captain, or coach can always tell whether or not a man is trying hard.)

In fielding your position, protect your weak side (see instruction to second-baseman); that is, so divide up your territory as to leave the larger part on your strong side.

Learn to "get the ball away from you" with the least possible delay. Practise catching and throwing with one motion. A ball that travels with great speed, but thrown with a long, slow motion, is not nearly so effective as a slower ball thrown with a speedy motion.

Be ready to cover second base, if the ball is hit on the first-base side of the diamond.

Play as deeply as possible, that is, as far as you can back of the base-line; this will enable you to cover a great deal of ground on hard-hit balls. The condition of your arm and the speed of the runner should regulate this distance.

When the ball is hit past the left-fielder—go out into left field (as the centre-fielder crosses over to help the left-fielder relay the ball in) and coach outfielder where to throw the ball. The second-baseman will cover second base. (See Diagrams IV and V, pages 200 and 201; also study Diagrams II, III, VI, and VII, pages 199, 200, 201, and 202.)

Play your position according to the individual batters—and according to the kind of balls pitched. (See Second-Baseman—Getting the Catcher's Signals.) You must play with the greatest possible speed on fast left-handed batters. Always be on the alert to pass your signals to the outfield. (See Second-Baseman—Passing Catcher's Signals to Outfield.)

In throwing or tossing the ball to second base at the beginning of a double play, throw the ball on the inside of the base, so that the second-baseman will have a better opportunity of throwing to first base. And remember that if you are close to second (but can't make the double yourself) toss the ball to second rather than throw it—make your motion speedy—keeping the ball high—thus giving the second-baseman time to cover the base and catch the ball.

Back up second base on balls thrown to second from right field (letting second-baseman cover the

ball); cover second base on balls thrown from left field to the base (second-baseman backing you up)—these directions apply only when, with no runner on base, a single has been hit to the outfield.

If, with nobody on base, as you fumble the ball you see that you cannot put the runner out at first, **HOLD THE BALL**. It is absolutely useless and sometimes dangerous to throw when you see that the man cannot be retired.

RUNNER ON FIRST BASE

See directions to second-baseman under the same conditions.

Cover second base according to what ball is pitched—and according to the batter—whether he is left or right handed, etc. With a runner on first base, if a base-hit is made to right field or right centre field, get in line with the throw from the fielder to third base. Stand about thirty feet in front of the third-baseman. The ball will be thrown to third base to cut off the runner, who will probably try to go from first base to third on the hit. Be ready to catch the ball if the third-baseman should tell you to (he will do so if he sees that the runner cannot be caught at third base), and play it to second to retire the batter, who, on the throw-in will be trying for that base.

If (when it is up to you to cover second base)

you see the runner stealing, do not leave your position immediately—you can hesitate and still be able to reach second ahead of the runner.

Be on the alert for push-hits (or drag-hits), and hit-and-run plays. (See Team Plays 21 and 22 *a*, *b*, *c*.)

When the ball is hit to your right in such a way that after you have fielded it you see that you can't get the man at second or first, feint to throw to first, and throw to second (you might get the runner as he steps over the base).

Always be on the alert for a steal or hit-and-run; be ready to cover second according to the ball called by the catcher. (See instructions to second-baseman on same play.)

Two out. Play back so as to cover ground, making the put-out at the easiest base. Cover second base according to signals in case the runner steals.

RUNNER ON SECOND BASE

When second base is occupied, if you fumble a hit ball and see that you cannot retire the runner at first, make a bluff to throw to first base, whirl and throw quickly to third—the runner from second to third will often be rounding that base to get a lead for home, and your throw may catch him.

On a ball that is hit between short-stop and

third, throw the man out at third, especially on a ball that would be very difficult to throw to first.

If the runner on second base is needed by his side to tie the score or win, then, when it is possible, throw him out at third.

When there is a runner on second base, it is the short-stop's duty to prevent that runner from getting a large lead off the base. By a pre-arranged signal with the pitcher (see Team Play 14), such as a nod of the head, a motion of the hand, etc., he should start for second, as the pitcher wheels and throws there. At other times, without using the signal with the pitcher, he should start back to second merely to get the runner to do the same (at the same time the pitcher throws to the batter as the runner is going back to second—his lead toward third, of course, being cut down considerably). The short-stop should be careful, in running the man back to second, not to leave his own position open for the batter to hit through. Don't leave your position when the pitcher is delivering the ball. For position of feet, catching ball, etc., see Position of Baseman's Feet—The Second-Baseman.

None out. (Read Team Plays 19 *d, e.*)

Very frequently the bunt is played here. A successful method of breaking up the play is for you to run the man back to second (leaving your

position open)—the pitcher puts a good ball over to the batter to bunt—then the pitcher and first-baseman run in and field the ball to third, catching the man there, for you will have held him up long enough to allow the play to go through. (See Team Play 15.)

One out. On all balls hit to you, unless the runner can be retired easily at third, *play the ball to first base.* Then there will be a man on third—but *two out.* And if the man should make third safely as you throw there, there will result the very undesirable situation of a man on first and third—with only one out.

Hold the runner as close to second as you can without leaving too much space open for a left-field hitter to hit through. This will help to prevent stolen bases and hit-and-run plays. When the runner refuses to be driven back to the base, use the signal (a slight nod or any hand sign) with the pitcher and catch the runner napping. (See Team Play 14.)

Two out. Unless you are several runs ahead, hold the runner on the base and throw the batter out at first.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

See Team Play 13.

For information as to what to expect the batter to do, see Team Plays 19 *f*, *g*, *h*, *i*.

In case of a double steal—both men stealing—short-stop should cover second in accordance with the usual method of signals.

RUNNER ON THIRD

The position to be taken and the style of play to be followed here depend upon the score and the stage of the game. For instructions whether to play in and retire the runner at home, or play back, see Team Play 12.

Whenever you are playing back, with a runner on third, disregard that runner on third, and play for the batter.

RUNNERS ON SECOND AND THIRD

See Team Plays 10 and 11.

RUNNERS ON FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD

See Team Plays 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD

See Team Plays 6, 7, 8, and 9.

Here the runners may attempt what is called "a double steal." In this play both runners attempt to advance a base.

Before taking part in breaking up this play, if, after considering the batter and the catcher's signals, you think the ball will be hit in your

direction, delay as long as possible before leaving your position to cover second base—otherwise leave as soon as the ball is on the way to the batter.

Observing the above instructions, you should cover second base if the runner on first is stealing. The second-baseman will cut in behind the pitcher and, if the runner on third base starts for home, will intercept the ball and throw it home. If the runner remains on third, the second-baseman will let the ball go to second base; then you are to catch the ball and retire the runner coming from first base. But be on the alert to prevent the runner on third from scoring while you are going after the runner at second. On this play you must watch the ball; if the second-baseman lets it go to you, catch it and tag the runner, but be quick about it, lest the man score from third. If the man from first stops before arriving at second, run him back toward first base—all the while watching the man on third—make the put-out at first base. If the man starts home from third, of course play him. (Practise receiving the ball on the run.)

Always as the batter takes his position in the box, you should decide what you will do with the ball if it is hit to you.

VI

THE THIRD-BASEMAN

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE THIRD-BASEMAN

Protect your weak side—that is, if it is hard for you to catch balls that are hit on one side, move over slightly toward that side, so as to cover the ground the more easily. Practise so as to strengthen your weak side.

On all bunts or other hit balls which the pitcher handles, get into the habit of dropping back to your base—you will be useless standing in the diamond if a runner is advancing to your base.

Go after all slow hits between you and the short-stop. Since, on this kind of a ball, you will be running toward first base, you can throw the batter out at first base much easier than the short-stop can—for he will be running away from first and consequently in a bad position to throw. But be careful about attempting to handle *hard-hit balls* which are between you and the short-stop. You will knock this kind of a ball away from you, and out of the reach of the short-stop,

when ordinarily he could handle the ball easily. By constant practice you will learn how much ground you can safely cover on fast balls. Always be ready to receive the ball from the catcher—going back to your base as the ball hits the catcher's glove.

The distance which you should play off the base must be determined by your speed and ability to cover ground. A safe distance is about three paces—more if you can play it safely. Always play so as to prevent a runner from getting a big lead toward home.

THE SQUEEZE PLAY

See Team Play 23.

It is impossible for you or any other infielder to break up the squeeze play if the ball is hit on the ground; but you can prevent two men from scoring by keeping your head, doing a little thinking, and acting accordingly. When only third base is occupied and the squeeze play is worked successfully, your play is to throw the ball to first base, as the runner from third will have too big a lead off the base to be caught at home. But, if there is a runner on second and third, and, on the squeeze play, the ball is bunted to you, you should make a sharp motion as though to throw to first base, but hold the ball and catch the man

who was leading off second when the play began and by this time will be rounding third base. If this second man plays the game rightly, he will have taken a big lead off second and, being very near third when the ball is bunted, will attempt to score on your throw to first. You can tell whether the man on second is in this play if he gets a big running start when the pitcher winds up.

HANDLING FLY BALLS

For suggestions on playing according to the wind, etc., see directions to the second-baseman on this subject.

NO RUNNERS ON BASE

Play the batter—that is, play according to who the batter is. If you know him to be a fast man and one who bunts, play in for him—that is, a few feet inside the base-line. If he is either slow, or a man who seldom bunts, play back of the base-line a few paces.

Never play in close for a batter who has two strikes; he will seldom attempt to bunt.

Learn to diagnose a batter's intention to bunt. There is a distinct difference between the preliminary motions of bunting and the preliminary motions of hitting the ball. If you watch closely, you will be able to tell when a batter will bunt—

at least you will know just before he bunts—and that will allow you time enough to take a few steps toward him. By thus studying the batters closely, you will be enabled to play a little deeper than ordinarily, coming in fast when you see that the batter will bunt. Of course, the deeper you play the less chance there will be of having a ball knocked past you.

Remember that, on all hard-hit balls (from a right-handed batter) which you field cleanly, you can throw the runner out at first by forty feet, since he is thrown completely off his stride when swinging at the ball, and is only ten feet from home when you have the ball in your hand. So steady up and make the play sure. But on all slow balls which roll toward third, hurry in and snap the ball to first by a sharp underhanded throw. (Practise this throw constantly.) It is the left-handed batter whom you must watch carefully. As he hits the ball, he swings directly into his stride toward first base. Therefore when he hits the ball you must lose no time in getting it to first base. Play in a little on left-handed batters.

RUNNER ON FIRST

Judge by the speed of the runner and the velocity with which the ball comes to you whether or not you can retire the runner at second base.

If the ball comes to you slowly, run in and, if necessary, pick it up with one hand; snap it to first base underhanded.

If, as you fumble a batted ball, you see that you cannot even retire the batter, make a feint to first base—then whirl and snap it to second. You may be able to catch the runner at second as he rounds that base preparatory to going to third on your throw to first. When you have thrown a batted ball to first base, hurry back to third to cover it in case any other play comes up.

On all hit balls which the pitcher handles, drop back to your base. (In other words, always cover your base when you are not actually taking part in some play in the diamond.)

When there is a runner on first base, if a base-hit is made to right field—or right centre field—the ball should be thrown by the outfielder to third base to prevent the runner from going from first to third. The short-stop should place himself in line with the thrown ball; and if the third-baseman sees that the ball cannot reach third so as to retire the runner, he should call to the short-stop to intercept it—the short-stop can then play it to second base. This play of the short-stop's will often retire the batsman who will have started for second base on the throw-in.

None out. Watch for the bunt or hit-and-

run play. These are the plays which the batter may attempt; therefore be ready for them. (For information about the conditions in which a batter may bunt, see Team Play 19.) A batter will seldom bunt when he has two strikes.

One out. There is little or no danger of the batter bunting, unless he is a very fast runner, so the third-baseman can play pretty well back—always, however, watching carefully for indication of a bunt—and being ready to go in fast if the ball is bunted.

If the ball is hit hard to you, you should throw to second to enable the second-baseman to complete a double play. (When throwing to second in this case, throw the ball so that the second-baseman can catch it inside of the diamond in front of base. In this way you reduce the chances of his throw to first being bothered by the runner coming from first.) Make this throw to second base good; you should at least retire the man at second.

Two out. Pay little or no attention to the base-runner. Get the batter at first base. The batter has the full ninety feet to run—while the man on first base has a “lead” of from ten to twelve feet or more.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

None out. Watch carefully for a bunt. If the ball is bunted to you, there is hardly ever a chance to retire the man at third or second—so throw to first. (Read Team Play 19.) Be ready to cover your base in case the pitcher is making a play to get the runner at third. (See Team Play 15.)

One out. Be ready to receive the ball on the catcher's throw if the runner should attempt to steal. Frequently when the runner is stealing third, the batter will make a feint at bunting to draw the third-baseman off the base. In this case the third-baseman should take a step toward the batter as he sees him attempt to bunt—but he can stop immediately when the ball is missed by the batter—and can cover third in plenty of time to take the ball as the catcher throws. If it is a bunt, the best you can do is to get the man at first; if it is a bluff, there is only one thing for you to do—*cover your base*.

On a hard-hit ball you have several ways of working a double play:

(1) On a ball hit to your right, and caught near the base, touch third and throw to first or second.

(2) On a ball hit directly at you, or to your left, you can sometimes touch the runner coming

from second and throw to second, retiring the runner from first.

(3) On a ball hit directly at you—when it is not possible to touch the runner going to third throw to second; from there the double will be completed at first base.

(4) On a line drive (which you catch) you can play the ball to second or first.

These plays are simple enough; but in order to play them right you should think them over as the batsman takes his position at the plate, planning what you would do if the ball be hit to you. *Do all the thinking you can ahead of time.*

Two out. It is generally safest to play the batter, as he has the longest distance to travel. But, of course, if the ball is fielded by you close to the base, the easiest and safest thing for you to do is to touch your base.

RUNNERS ON FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD

None out or one out. If the batter is a hard left-field hitter, it is well to play a few paces back of the line. Whether or not to play deep and try for a double play, letting the man on third score, depends upon the score, the stage of the game, etc. These conditions are dealt with in Team Plays 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

On a hard-hit ball, which you field cleanly, your

play would be to throw the ball home, retiring the man on a force-out. (The catcher would then throw the batter out at first.)

On a slow-hit ball, of course, you would try to get the ball to first base ahead of the batter, immediately going back to cover your own base to receive the ball if it is returned to you by the first-baseman.

Two out. If the ball is hit hard to you, touch your base, forcing out the man from second (there is no use throwing to another base unless you are absolutely forced to do so); otherwise throw to first base.

RUNNER ON SECOND BASE (Study Diagram III, page 200.)

None out. Play as directed with man on first and second and none out, always being ready for a sacrifice bunt. But never leave your position if the runner is stealing third until the ball is either hit or missed by the batsman.

One out. Play as directed with man on first and second and one out. Sometimes when the ball is hit hard to you, the runner will stop between second and third—in this case run him back to second—making the put-out at that base. (A base-runner, when caught between bases, should be run back toward the base from which he came.

If a man is caught between home and third base, he should be run back to third and put out there.) In case the man at second hasn't started for third (or if he is but a few steps from second) throw the ball to first—you will have plenty of time to take a quick look toward second before throwing to first. If you fumble the ball and can't get the man at first, make a bluff to throw to first, whirl and throw to second; on this play the runner on second will often start for third on your motion to throw to first, and you can catch him off second.

Two out. Throw to first base to retire the runner.

RUNNER ON THIRD BASE (Study Diagram VIII, page 202.)

One or none out. (See Team Play 12.)

Two out. Throw to first base.

RUNNERS ON SECOND AND THIRD BASES

One or none out. (See Team Plays 10 and 11.)

Two out. Throw to first base.

RUNNERS ON FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD BASES

One or none out. (See Team Plays 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.)

Two out. Throw to first base or make the easiest force-out.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD BASES

One or none out. (See Team Plays 6, 7, 8, and 9.)

Two out. Throw to first base.

Always, as the batsman takes his position, decide what you will do if the ball is hit to you.

VII

THE OUTFIELDER

The outfielder is expected to do more than become adept at catching ordinary fly balls. He should be able to cover all the ground in his section on all sides of him. He should put in at least two-thirds of his time catching flies that are over his head. (If he cannot find anybody to hit the ball over his head during practice while he is in his usual position, he should come in closer, so as to make the ordinary fly balls go over his head.) What is needed is the practice of turning and running back while the ball is in the air, and stopping in time to turn again to catch it. To be able to catch these long flies requires a great deal of practice, but the ability is worth much work—as this kind of a ball generally goes for several bases when allowed to get away.

In catching fly balls, do not time the ball; that is, do not so regulate your speed as to arrive at the place where the ball will fall at just the moment when it lands. It is safer to run as fast as

possible, get directly under the ball, and wait for it to come down. Get started fast after the ball, as every fraction of a second lost means a great deal. Practise getting started "with the crack of the bat," that is, the instant that the ball is hit start in its direction. After a great deal of practice, it will become natural and easy for you to start in the right direction instantly. *When you know that you can get the ball, call out to the other fielders, "Mine" or "I have it."* The outfielder should, when it is possible, catch fly balls in a position from which it is easy to return the ball to the infielder without loss of time. For instance, if a player after catching a ball has to change the position of his feet and shift his whole body before he can throw it, it is quite evident that he will on occasion lose valuable time.

When the ball is being returned from the outfield to the home-base to retire a runner, it should reach the catcher on the first bound—landing ten or fifteen feet in front of the plate. This prevents all overthrows, and gives the catcher a better opportunity of handling the ball. Long throws from right field to third base should reach the base on the first bound—using a long bound to give the baseman a chance to handle it. Fielders should constantly practise throwing the ball to bases and home-plate on the first bound. The ability to

make this throw accurately and swiftly will prevent many a stolen base.

Always warm your arm up well before going into a game; then when you are called upon to throw to the plate, you can do so without injuring your arm. But don't wait until you go to the outfield before warming up; while you are waiting for your turn in batting practice, play catch, and exercise your arm.

Figure out ahead of each play what you will do with the ball if it is hit to you. This is the most important rule in baseball (and applies to each one of the nine players on the field) and should never be disregarded. By following this rule, you will save time, and your plays will be correct; if you wait until you get the ball before thinking what to do with it, you will blunder, or play so slowly that you lose the man.

Do not rob other fielders of balls that they can easily catch. Many collisions between fielders result from a desire to cover too much ground. If the ball is hit between two fielders, both should start instantly for it—the man who can most handily get it calling out, "Mine;" then the other withdraws and lets him take it. When your neighboring fielder is going back after a fly, you can often assist him by calling out when you think it is time for him to turn to catch the ball.

RELAYING THE BALL TO THE HOME-PLATE

Left-fielder. If the ball is hit past the outfield so that the left-fielder can best recover it, the centre-fielder should cross over and place himself in a position to relay the ball to the infield, the short-stop backing up the latter fielder and directing him where to throw the ball (while the second-baseman covers second base). (See Diagram IV, page 200.)

Centre-fielder. If the ball is hit past the outfield so that the centre-fielder can best recover it, either the left-fielder or right-fielder who can most handily do so should place himself in position to relay the ball to the infield. Either the short-stop or second-baseman should back up and direct the play—leaving the other to cover second. The position of the ball will determine who is to assist in the relay and who is to cover second base. (See Diagrams V and VI, page 201.)

Right-fielder. If the ball is hit past the outfield so that the right-fielder can best recover it, the centre-fielder should relay the ball to the infield—the second-baseman backing up and directing the play (while the short-stop covers second base). (See Diagram VII, p. 202.)

(On long-hit balls, in which a relay is neces-

sary from one outfielder to another, throw the ball *at* the fielder assisting you in the relay, not over his head, or fifteen or twenty feet either side of him.) Relaying the ball to the plate and infield should be practised constantly.

BACKING UP BASES

Outfielders should always back up their respective bases; *i. e.*, the left-fielder takes care of third base; centre-fielder takes care of second base; and the right-fielder first base. By backing up a base is meant standing fifty feet back of the base in line with the throw. In backing up a base, an outfielder should start instantly as the ball is thrown toward that base; but in case, for instance, that he sees a man stealing as the pitcher is throwing to the batter, he should not leave his position until the ball is either hit or in the catcher's hands. (Otherwise the ball might be hit into the place which he has left vacant.)

The left-fielder should back up third base on all throws from the catcher to third, on all throws from the right-fielder to third, and on all throws from first to third. He can be ready on throws from first to second. (See Diagrams II, VI, VII, VIII, and XII, pages 199-204.)

The centre-fielder should back up second base on all throws to that base from the pitcher and

catcher. (See Diagrams II, III, VIII, and XII, pages 199-204.)

The right-fielder should back up first base on throws to first base from the catcher and pitcher—and throws from third to first and on bunts thrown to first—and he should back up second base, on throws from third to second on doubles. (See Diagrams I and VIII, pages 199 and 202.)

It is the duty of outfielders to come in fast and back up the infield on all balls hit there (as well as on all balls thrown to bases to retire runners). (See Diagrams II and VIII, pages 199 and 202.) Run over close to your neighboring fielder when he is catching a fly; then, if necessary, you can coach him as to where to throw the ball.

If two fielders are going after a fly ball which goes over their heads, one should chase the ball while the other runs toward the diamond to help relay the ball to the infield.

Always take the wind into consideration (its direction and velocity) in catching flies and in throwing the ball in to the infield.

It is a good plan *frequently* to throw dirt or grass up in the air to find out what you can about the wind. When the wind is blowing in toward the diamond, play a short field—that is, nearer than usual to the infield. This kind of wind will hold the ball up in the air, thus allowing you time to

go back and get fly balls, while by playing close you can cut off many short outfield hits.

When the wind is blowing from the diamond toward the outfield, play a deep field—that is, a good, long distance from the infield (depending on how strong the wind is and on the ability of the batter), as the ball will be carried farther than ordinarily.

When the wind is across the diamond, allow for balls “carrying” with the wind. When the sun is shining in your eyes, use smoked glasses, or shade the eyes with the gloved hand (with the arm extended). Do not look toward the sun except when you have to—look at the grass or anywhere but into the sun. Of course, you must always know where the ball is and get ready as the pitcher takes his position to pitch.

It is necessary that all fielders have plenty of practice handling balls that are hit on the ground, as they are much harder to field than the average fly ball. Be sure to get your body directly in front of the ball, especially if it is hard hit. Be content with stopping this kind of a ball—you will thereby prevent extra bases, which will result if the ball gets past you. If, however, the tying or winning run is on first or second base and the ball is hit hard on the ground to the outfielder, he should play it like an infielder, that

is, pick it up as cleanly and quickly as possible and return it to the infield.

A very difficult ball to judge is a line drive—that is, a fly ball that goes almost on a straight line from the bat to the outfielder (without going high into the air). Fielders should get a great deal of practice on these balls, for if one is misjudged it usually results in a home run for the batter.

Fielders should practise coming in fast on ground balls, as the rapid handling of them often means shutting off runs at the plate.

It should be uppermost in every fielder's mind to get the ball away from him as rapidly as possible, but intelligently.

Batters who choke their bats (that is, who shorten the hitting end of the bat) seldom hit long drives; therefore play in for them.

Learn to play according to individual batters. Remember where each batter hits, and shift your position accordingly. Right-handed batters generally make their long hits in left field and left centre field; left-handed batters make theirs in right and right centre field. Generally, on left-handed batters the left-fielder can play in a little toward the infield, because these batters seldom make long hits into left field.' Of course there are left-handed batters who hit equally well

in any direction; but this fact is readily discovered and can be guarded against by the fielders.

When you are playing according to the battery signals, do not disclose that fact by changing your position before the pitcher delivers the ball to the batter.

When there is one or none out and a man on third, with one run needed to win, drop long foul flies that are too far to be thrown to the plate. The outfield, when their side is two or more runs ahead, should not take desperate chances of retiring the runner at home-plate; they should return the ball to the infield in such a way as to prevent the other runners from advancing. For instance, if, while there are three men on the bases and the side in the field is two or more runs ahead, the ball is hit (either in the air or on the ground) so that the fielder, upon recovering it, sees that he cannot very readily throw home in time to retire the runner there, he should throw to third base; but if that base cannot be reached by the ball in time to head off a runner, he should throw to second base.

With the score standing as above, and a runner on first and third, if a fly ball is caught by an outfielder, unless he is within easy throwing distance of home-plate, he should throw to second to hold the runner on first. If the ball is a base-hit, he should throw to third base to prevent the

runner from going from first to third. If it is more than a base-hit, it should be played according to directions above for "Relaying the Ball to the Home-Plate."

In all other conditions (with the score as above) the runner who is going home should be disregarded, if he cannot be readily caught, and the ball thrown to prevent the most advanced runner from gaining another base.

When the score is close, toward the last of the game, every effort should be made to retire the runner going home. During the early part of the game desperate chances should not be taken to prevent a man from scoring, as this will usually allow other runners to advance within scoring distance.

In the last half of the last inning (one or none out), when the runner on third base will win the game if he scores, the outfielders should come in toward the infield within easy throwing distance of home-plate. In this case a hit will score the man anyway; a fly ball over the fielders' heads will score the man (for even if caught it cannot be returned in time to head the runner off at home), whereas any fly ball caught can be thrown home to catch the runner; and then, when playing in this way, the outfielder may catch many line drives which otherwise would be base-hits.

VIII

BATTING

It is entirely unnecessary to dwell upon the importance of batting in baseball; suffice it to say that if a man hopes ever to become a good ball player he *must* bat well. To some players batting comes naturally; by others it is learned only with great patience and courage—determination. It is a very true saying that “Batters are born and not made.” That, of course, refers to natural batters. There is no such a thing as developing good batters out of men who have poor eyes for batting and bad form in swinging at the ball. These men can be corrected as far as their general faults go—their batting can be improved; but it is a rare exception to the general rule if one becomes a good hitter. Otherwise, why would the major leagues spend thousands and thousands of dollars each year buying new men who can bat, and letting once valuable men go who have fallen off in their batting? If batters could be made, why wouldn’t managers keep their own players and develop their batting, instead of let-

ting them go (after probably paying large sums for them originally)? However, if players start early enough they can overcome many of their faults, and can go through the mechanical part of batting—their eyes must furnish the rest. Most batters can improve with careful study and practice.

The following suggestions should be of assistance to players who are interested in batting:

Learn to stand up to the plate without fear of being hit by the ball. Remember that the pitcher is trying to throw the ball over the plate and not at you. All pitchers put their greatest efforts into controlling the ball, and to hit a batter is considered poor control; therefore never worry about being hit. If a speedy ball comes directly at you, step away, always watching the ball; but if a half-speed ball—or one which you can easily tell is not meant for a fast one—comes at you, keep your position and be ready to hit it, because in all probability it will be a curve which will break over the base. Do not let the pitcher drive you away from the plate. Determine just what position is best for you to take—and keep it. If the pitcher throws fast balls close to your body, do not whirl away, turning your back to the ball; for if you do you will let many curved balls go over the base. The safest way on the close ball

is to step away from the plate, if possible keeping the back leg stationary, all the while facing the pitcher, with the bat ready to hit the ball if it comes over the plate.

Hold the bat firmly in both hands, keeping your elbows away from your sides so as to swing freely (thus avoiding the awkward, cramped swing which is so ineffective) and using a vigorous snap of the forearms.

Keep the back foot firmly on the ground.

Your step forward and swing should be made both at the same time (or as nearly so as possible). The greatest difficulty to overcome is that of stepping too quickly. By stepping too quickly you make the step and the swing two separate motions at different times; this makes it difficult for you to hit the ball.

Another difficulty is that of stepping too far. If you take a very long stride, you naturally lower the plane in which you hit—you virtually become shorter than when you take a smaller stride—and balls which the umpire will call strikes will be high for you. These difficulties can be overcome by watching yourself, thinking constantly, and persistently trying.

Never swing at the ball with all your power—for the harder you swing the more likely you are to miss the ball, since you take your eye off the



Correct way: By taking this position the batter may hit, even if deceived momentarily, should the ball become a strike.



Incorrect way: By taking this position the batter loses opportunity for hitting if the ball becomes a strike.

POSITION OF BATTER IN PREPARING FOR CLOSE BALL.

ball by the *viciousness* of your effort. Learn to take a steady, true swing, bringing the bat around in a plane parallel to the ground, and keeping your eye on the ball. Hit at the ball where you *see* it is—not where you *guess* it is.

Hitting ability depends a great deal upon the strength of the forearms and wrists, as the bat is brought around faster if the forearms are used; therefore, develop them. Early in the season swing three bats as often as possible, and just before going to bat swing three. In addition to actually strengthening the wrists, swinging three bats immediately before going up to hit makes the one bat seem much lighter and more easily handled against speed.

A most important element in batting is timing the pitcher's motion. By some regular motion of your body or bat, get into the rhythm of the pitcher's swing. Do this while you are standing waiting for your turn, as well as when you are at bat. The batter should also study the combinations of balls which the pitcher uses; for instance, whether he depends chiefly upon curves or fast balls; whether the first ball is usually straight or curved; whether he is using a change of pace, and how.

Get into the habit of hitting ahead of you—meet the ball well in front of you. By so doing

you will be the aggressor, instead of waiting to see what the ball will do and generally hitting too late.

Do not try to hit all balls into one field. If you are right-handed, pull close balls into left field, and drive wide balls into right field (and vice versa if you are a left-handed batter). If you are known to hit regularly into one particular section of the field, you will observe that the opposing fielders shift into that section. You may be sure that the pitcher knows of your tendency to hit into that particular field and that he will pitch probably to your weakness (that is, he will try to make you hit the ball in a direction which is unusual for you). For instance, suppose that you are a right-handed batter and that you hit all (or nearly all) balls to left field. The outfield and infield, when you are at bat, will shift toward left field; and the pitcher will try to keep the ball away from you—that is, on the outside corner of the base. Now, if you are intelligent you will realize all this; and, instead of trying to pull the outside ball to left field, you will try to push it to right field, *which the fielders, in shifting, have left unprotected.*

Many batters fail to hit the ball successfully because they lower their bat and hit up at the ball, the only ball they can hit at all being a

very low one (this will be very evident to the pitcher, who will keep them all high). Keep the bat and the weight of the body as far as possible *above* the ball, hitting *down* at it rather than up, *but preferably in a plane parallel with the ground*. Keep the weight of the body on the back leg, which should be well braced. Don't squat or bend your knees to hit a low ball; rather keep the back leg almost stiff and "golf" or "cricket" the ball.

A right-handed batter, especially, should avoid hitting hard at the ball, for such a motion will throw him away off his stride in starting for first base; he will have to lose valuable time in recovering himself for his run to first. Use the arms, forearms, and wrists.

Don't use a bat that feels heavy in your hands; use one that you can snap ahead of a fast ball. Do not be afraid of striking out; take a good, steady, hard swing at the ball (that does not mean striking with all your might); then, if you hit it, it will go far enough. If you are afraid of missing it and only hit half-heartedly, you will either miss it entirely or knock a miserable little "roller."

Only natural hitters should use long bats—a man who has a good eye for judging both speed and curves can grasp his bat by the end; but the ordinary batter will get better results by using

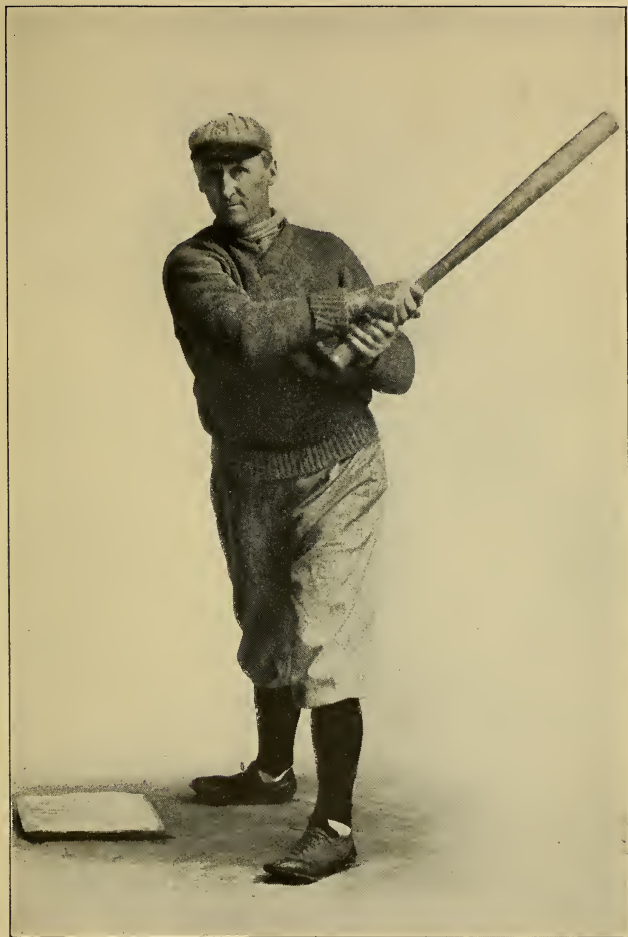
a short bat or by grasping a long bat four or five inches from the handle (choking it). This shorter bat enables him to follow the ball closely with his eyes while he snaps the bat around to meet the ball.

Many batters hit late at the ball because they make two motions of their swing; that is, they wait until the ball has left the pitcher's hand before drawing the bat back to swing; then they jerk it back and swing forward—too late to meet the ball squarely. Keep the bat well behind you and, as the pitcher throws the ball, make but one motion and that toward the ball, meeting it in front of the plate.

When stepping forward to hit, point the toe of the front foot into the diamond—otherwise you will be off your balance if the ball comes on the inside corner of the plate, and naturally you cannot hit it. (If a batter does not point his toe into the diamond when he steps, a close ball will make him lift his toes and fall back, rising on his heels.)

Take your step and get the bat ready to hit every ball pitched. Don't assume too early that the ball will be bad and then stand there unprepared to hit it if it should go over the base.

A right-handed batter should hit a left-handed pitcher's fast ball with confidence, since this ball



COMPLETION OF A CORRECT SWING IN HITTING.

The batter has maintained such poise as to have avoided the vice of throwing himself off balance and of turning his back toward the pitcher.

breaks away from the batter; a left-handed batter has the same advantage over a right-handed pitcher.

A very good practice is that of standing in the batter's position whenever a pitcher is throwing to a catcher (it isn't even necessary for you to have a bat in your hands) and decide which balls you would hit at and which you would let go by. This is good training for the eye.

A batter who can't hit a close ball should not stand near the base, as by so doing he makes even good balls close. He should get away from the plate—a foot if necessary; then any ball that looks close will be inside of the base and consequently not a strike. And again, if a batter likes a close ball but can't hit a wide one, he should hug the plate, that is, put his feet as close to the plate as the umpire will let him.

Most batters have certain weak spots, that is, they have difficulty in hitting the ball if it is thrown in certain places, or in certain ways. Many batters cannot hit a ball that looks as though it were going to hit them but curves over the base; many batters have an irresistible impulse to hit at high balls; weaknesses of this nature can be overcome to a great degree by constant practice and thinking. If you can't hit a curved ball, go out on the field early every day

and have somebody throw curve ball after curve ball at you; gradually you will become accustomed to that kind of a ball and it will lose its terror for you. If you can't resist a ball that is high (and you find that you can't hit it), have a player throw plenty of high balls at you—but let them all go. This practice will generally break the spell which the high ball has over you. If there are other points at which you are not strong, put special attention on just these points until you can control them.

When taking your position to bat (with a runner on first base) you can often tell who will cover second base by the distances from the base which the short-stop and second-baseman are playing. So, if, for instance, you are a left-field hitter and the short-stop is playing well back for you, try to hit to the right on the hit-and-run play (since the second-baseman will be covering second).

BUNTING

The importance of successful bunting cannot be overemphasized. Many games are won and lost either by the ability or inability of the players to bunt. Bunting is one of the first things to be learned by a ball player; he should spend hour after hour if necessary in practising it, and he

should continue to practise it throughout his career, never allowing himself to become weak at it.

Bunting means allowing the bat to be struck by the ball in such a way that it will roll slowly on the ground into the diamond. When intending to bunt, be sure to conceal your intention as long as possible. And the most successful way to do this is to develop a bunting motion that is as near like your hitting motion as you can make it. Hold the bat as though you were going to hit; then, as the pitcher delivers the ball, take your usual step, bringing the bat forward with the body, the hands spread apart five or six inches, gripping the bat loosely, and holding it parallel to the ground. In directing the ball to the left or right, the hand which has been run out toward the middle of the bat should be used as a pivot while the other turns the bat. If the ball is low, the bat should not be dropped to meet it; the body should be bent as you carry the bat down to meet the ball, in this way following the course of the ball closely.

When you are called upon to make a sacrifice bunt, remember that the primary reason for your doing so is to advance the base-runner, and *not* to put yourself safely on first base. Therefore stand there and bunt the ball before you think of anything else. (*For direction when to make the sac-*

rifice bunt see Team Play 19.) When you are called upon to make a sacrifice bunt, *pick out a good ball!* This is the only time when the batter can control the bat in such a way as to let all bad balls go by; therefore, when bunting, be sure that the ball is over the base between the shoulder and the knee.

A fast runner can diversify his style of play while at bat (when there are no runners on bases), either by bunting the ball or using the drag-hit (see Team Play 21) and trying to beat the ball to first base. Then the next time he comes up to bat the infield will probably play in for him, thus increasing his opportunity of hitting safely. Frequently even a slow runner, when the infield is playing back, can bunt and reach first base safely. The batter should always be ready to do the unexpected thing; it will then be difficult for opponents to diagnose his intentions. If the batter is to sacrifice a runner from second to third, and the opposing short-stop is holding the runner close to second (being about to attempt Team Play 15), the batter, using his own judgment, or, upon receiving a signal from his manager, can hit the ball through short-stop, as that position is left open. (This play ought, however, to be left to the discretion of the individual captain or manager.)

THE HIT-AND-RUN PLAY

See Team Play 22.

When the sign for the hit-and-run play is given, the batter should make every possible effort to hit the ball if it is within reach of his club. But if the ball is completely out of his reach, the batter might just as well let it go (for the fact that he merely swings at it won't bother the catcher).

Whenever a batter has two strikes, he should not hit at a bad ball to help a base-runner who is stealing a base, especially when, with two out, the runner is going from first to second.

THE SQUEEZE PLAY

See Team Play 23.

In order to make this play successfully, learn to bunt!

The batter should practise giving signals in an easy, natural manner, and in order to conceal his signals he should be constantly making motions that have nothing to do with his particular signals.

When the batter (with no strikes) sees that the runner on second base is going to steal (unless he is playing the hit-and-run) he may at times make a feint to bunt the ball, thus drawing the third-baseman off his base.

The batter, when leading off in an inning, or at any other time when there are no runners on bases and none out, should generally take one strike before hitting at the ball (that is, he should deliberately allow a strike to be called on him). If there are three balls against the batter, he should take two strikes before hitting. By adopting this method the batter will frequently force the pitcher to give him four balls.

With no one on base *and one or two out*, the batter should try to get the pitcher in the hole (that is, get the advantage over him in balls and strikes) and then should be ready to hit the next ball. The reason for doing this is that the batter will be fairly sure of getting a good ball as soon as the pitcher is in the hole.

When there is a runner on second and third base, or second or third, the batter with two balls and no strikes should *not* take a strike but should hit the first good ball. Even with three balls and no strikes it is frequently considered advisable to hit the next good ball, especially if the batsman is a good hitter. Of course, a batsman who is not a good hitter should always try to get a base on balls.

IX

BASE-RUNNING

THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING STARTED FROM THE HOME-PLATE

The distance from home to first base, although actually ninety feet, is really much longer than the distance between any of the other bases for the runner. The truth of this statement will be apparent when one realizes that, while runners on other bases often get as much as twelve or thirteen feet leads before the ball is even thrown to the batter, the batter starts flat-footed right from the plate. Even to the left-handed batter, who has the advantage over the right-handed batter, the distance is long—at most he can get but a single step as the ball is hit—while the right-handed batter always has more than ninety feet to run.

The right-handed batter, being at a disadvantage compared with the left-handed batter (as far as getting to first base is concerned), should reduce his swing as much as possible—because as he swings he throws himself farther away from first base.

The left-handed batter throws himself toward first base as he swings, and therefore has three or four steps advantage over the right-handed batter.

Batters should always "run out" all hit balls at top speed. Often what seems like a sure out will result in the batter's being safe at first if he will but go down the base-line fast. Learn to touch the base with either foot as you continue your stride across the base—do not jump at the base on the last step; continue a steady, swift stride. On all fly balls and balls that are hit safely, instead of continuing straight ahead over first base, begin at about twenty feet from the plate and go out of the base-line, circling around before crossing the base, turning the base sharply, thus getting a running start for second. (By making this turn at first base—see Diagram XIII, page 205—you will be enabled to run to second without circling far outside of the base-lines.) Then if the fly ball be dropped you are in a position to go to second—if the base-hit be fumbled, you are ready to stretch the single into a two-base-hit; if it be a short two-base-hit, you can make it with greater certainty than if you were to overrun first base.

When on base, always follow the ball closely; never step off the base until you know exactly where the ball is—you will always have plenty of

time to get your lead as the pitcher takes his position on the rubber. (This is a most important rule, and the best players are frequently put out when they disregard it.) Another safe rule to follow is that of not trying to take your lead off the base when the pitcher is standing out of his box.

When returning to first base, keep your eyes on the ball. (The pitcher may snap it to first if you aren't looking.)

THE LEAD OFF FIRST BASE

It is generally conceded that the most important part of base-running is the lead off the base and the quick start. And the distance which the base-runner can go from the base while the pitcher is in possession of the ball can only be determined by the individual runner after much practice. A left-handed pitcher usually compels the runner to stay closer to first base than does a right-handed pitcher, since the former faces the base and can throw either to the batter or to first with almost the same motion.

The lead off first base depends first of all upon the runner's ability to slide back to the base when the pitcher throws to catch him. A great deal of time should be spent in practising the slide back to first base—sometimes feet first,

sometimes head first. And in games it will be discovered that on some pitchers a longer lead can be taken than on others; the lead can be increased proportionately—always determined by the runner's ability to return safely to the base. At the same time, it is absolutely necessary that the runner be able to go in either direction—back to the base or on to second; therefore get off just as far as you can, always being able to return safely, or go to second as the pitcher makes his motion to throw. A good lead is necessary whether you intend to steal or not.

THE QUICK START

In base-stealing, as well as in base-running generally, success depends not only on a big lead, but upon the quick start—that is, getting started as soon as possible before the ball leaves the pitcher's hand as he makes his motion to deliver the ball to the batter. Almost all pitchers make a motion with some part of the body (arm, head, shoulder, foot, etc.) that betrays the fact that they will throw to the batter. A careful study of the pitcher will disclose this motion, a knowledge of which will be of great assistance to the base-runner. When you are going to steal a base or play the hit and run, look for this motion, and as soon as you see it start for the next base.

(Much may be gained by close observation from the bench when you are not at bat.)

THE FALL-AWAY SLIDE

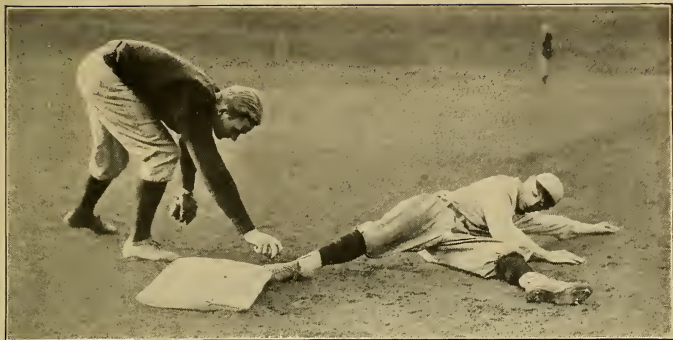
(See cut facing page 130.) In gaining any base (except in running from home to first) or returning to any base when there is a possibility of being put out, the runner should slide feet first. (Sliding head first offers too great an opportunity for the baseman to block the runner off the base.) What is called the fall-away slide is the most effective. The fall-away slide is one wherein the runner approaching a base throws his body out of the base-line, landing on his side, and hooking the base with the foot of the uppermost leg, sliding on the under leg bent beneath him. Some players slide on the under leg extended, but in this case great care must be exercised not to catch the spikes of the heel of the under foot in the ground. (Many wrenched ankles result from catching the heel spikes in the ground while sliding.) When sliding back to first base, the runner falls to his left, sliding on his left leg bent beneath him, and hooking the base with the instep or toe of the right foot.

Every baseball player should know how to use the fall-away slide. The first consideration in learning this slide is a pair of sliding pads—cov-

ering for the hips—to prevent the skin from being burned by the friction. Then pick out a place where the soil is soft; use some kind of a stationary base at which to slide, and begin by taking short runs at the base. Do not jump directly at the base, but endeavor to slide away from it, catching the base with the toe of the foot which is uppermost. When sliding to the left, hook with right toe—and when sliding to the right, use the left toe. The advantage of this slide is that the baseman has only a small portion of your body to touch with the ball—that is, your foot which you hook to the base as your body falls away. It is a great advantage to a base-runner to be able to slide on both sides. For instance, if he is stealing second, and the catcher throws the ball low (he can tell by watching the baseman's hands) a slide to the left would put him in an easy position to be tagged; while if he slid to the right he would be getting out of the way of the baseman. On a high throw either slide would do.

It is rarely necessary to slide to first base when running from home. It is doubtful whether any time is really saved; it certainly makes the umpire's decision more difficult, and most managers discourage it.

Only continual practice will tell a player how far from the base he should begin his slide. The



A slide of just enough velocity to bring the right foot to the base.



Sliding with the lower leg bent under the other.



A slide of such velocity as to carry the body widely off the base-line

THE FALL-AWAY SLIDE.

only safe way is to run at full speed and practise hooking the base; if your speed carries you past the base, do not lessen your speed but begin your slide sooner, that is, farther from the base. It is always very dangerous to slacken your speed before sliding; many broken ankles have resulted when runners have attempted to slow up and then slide.

A base-runner, when stealing a base, should not look back toward the catcher. Such an action is certain to lessen the runner's speed somewhat. He should get his start, run with all his speed—eyes riveted on the base and the man covering it—and slide when he is within striking distance.

He should practise getting up on his feet with all possible speed after he has slid to a base, to take advantage of any misplay that may offer him opportunity to go to the next base.

In stealing second base, always get a good lead, but do not communicate to the pitcher and catcher the fact that you intend to steal. (If you do, they will work the pitch-out sign to catch you at second, or the pitcher will keep throwing to first to hold you close to the base.) It is well, even when you do not intend to steal, to get a good big lead—being ready, of course, to return to the base at the slightest motion of the pitcher. (Fast base-runners in this way often worry the

pitcher into giving *bases on balls* to the batters.) If the ball is hit when you are attempting to steal, try to follow the ball with your eyes, especially if it is a fly ball. If the ball is hit safely, use your judgment and try to go to third base; of course, if it is a short safe hit, or directly into a fielder's hands, only try to draw the throw to third by rounding second sharply as if intending to continue on to third. (Sometimes the fielder, in trying to "head you off" at third, will make an overthrow to that base.) If it is a fly ball, stop between the bases—ready to go to second if it is dropped, or back to first if caught. Good judgment will have to be used to decide how far from first to play as the ball is caught. For instance, if the ball is hit to left field, the runner can safely play half-way to second, since, even if the ball is caught, he can return in safety to first base; but if a fly ball is hit to short right field, he cannot play very far off the base, as a quick throw to the base might beat him back to it, completing a double play.

BASE-RUNNER ON FIRST

When on first base *with none out*, the runner, expecting the batter to bunt, should be on the alert; for if the batter misses the ball, the catcher is apt to return the ball sharply to the first-base-

man or to the second-baseman, who has come in behind and covered first base. Therefore, if the ball is not hit by the batter, be ready to return quickly to first base—all the while watching the catcher, who has the ball.

Three strikes on the batter, when there is one or no one out, puts him out; don't think you are forced to run if the catcher drops the third strike.

One out. In this case the runner may steal without assistance from the batter, or work with the batter in the hit-and-run play (as he may do also with none out).

When a runner is on first base, he should do all in his power to avoid being involved in a double play. The greater the lead he can get before the ball is hit, the greater are his chances of reaching second before the ball can be played there. It is for this reason that the hit-and-run play is used; even when the ball isn't hit safely, it must be fielded very sharply to shut the man off at second. And when the ball is hit safely, frequently the great start will enable the man who was on first to go to third, especially if the ball is hit to right field.

When the hit-and-run signal is given (see Hit-and-Run Signals, Team Play 22), get your accustomed lead off first, and start as though you were going to steal clean—don't depend upon the

batter's hitting the ball. If he misses it, take your fade-away slide into second with all your speed. If the batter does hit the ball, take a quick look at the ball. If in your judgment you can go to third base, do so, always calculating on your own speed and the ability of the fielder to throw. If, when occupying first, second, or third, a long fly ball is hit which you think is far enough away to permit your advancing a base when it is caught, return to the base you are occupying and start for the next base instantly as the fielder catches the ball. Here careful judgment must be used by the base-runner taking into consideration his own speed, the position of the ball, and the fielder's throwing ability. Of course, with two out, the runner should continue to advance, regardless of the position of ball, etc.

Two out. Whenever the runner is fairly fast he should steal second (except when the pitcher is batting, for if the runner is caught at second, the pitcher will have to start the batting in the next inning). But if the side be several runs behind—where one run won't make much difference in the score—the runner should play safely, waiting for a hit to send him around.

It is, of course, not advisable generally to steal on the first ball pitched, for it is likely to be a waste ball thrown on purpose to catch him at second.

When it is possible, steal when the pitcher is in the hole; that is, when there are several balls and fewer strikes on the batter.

BASE-RUNNER ON SECOND (OR FIRST
AND SECOND)

First of all—WATCH THE BALL. When the pitcher has it—and is in his box—then the runner can safely take his lead. The lead off second should be such that the runner can get back to the base safely when the pitcher turns to throw to that base. *And the runner should never go back to the base unless the pitcher turns toward second; then he should slide back to the base.* It is bad baseball for a runner to take such a big lead off second base that he is constantly worrying about being caught. The short-stop will continually try to drive the runner back to the base by feinting to go to the base; for instance, the pitcher will look over his shoulder at the runner, and as he does so the short-stop will start as though to cover second, whereupon the runner (if he has a big lead) will start back to second a step or two—possibly more; at that instant the pitcher will throw to the batter, leaving the runner going back to second. And if the batter hit safely, the runner will probably be thrown out at the plate, whereas he would have scored had he been

going toward third instead of back to second when the ball was hit.

Another instance in which it is fatal to be driven back toward second base is the following:

Suppose you are on second base—no one out—and your side wants a run badly, and the batter intends to sacrifice you to third. The pitcher will look back at you, the short-stop going all the way to second; then, as you return to second, the pitcher puts a nice ball over the base; the batter bunts, the pitcher or first-baseman fields the ball, and you are thrown out at third base—just because you allowed yourself to be driven back to second (when the pitcher did not turn to throw to that base). Therefore, never return to second or start that way—unless the pitcher turns around to throw there. Take a good lead but let it be such that it will enable you to go back to the base safely when the pitcher does throw to catch you; then you will always be ready to advance toward third on the pitcher's motion as he delivers the ball to the plate.

RUNNER ON SECOND

None out. The base-runner, if possible, should observe the catcher's signals (calling for the fast or curve ball) and by some prearranged signal, such as a motion of the hand or foot, should com-

municate to the batter what kind of a ball is coming.

A bunt may be expected, especially if the batter is a weak hitter. Play safely, don't take many chances. Don't be "bluffed" back to second. On a short, clean hit turn third swiftly and be ready to score in case of the ball being fumbled. If the ball is fielded cleanly, feint to go home, thus drawing a throw to the home-plate, which will allow the batter to go to second.

One out. Take a good lead and score on a hit. Be ready for hit-and-run play, but stop between the bases on a fly ball to the outfield. A speedy man occasionally can get a good lead and steal third—always being on the alert, however, not to give away the intention of stealing—and ready to return to second if the pitcher turns. It is well not to get into the habit of depending on the coaches to keep you informed as to what the short-stop and second-baseman are doing. Watch the pitcher, and be able to return if he throws to catch you. (In a game where excitement among the spectators runs high, it is impossible to hear the coaches anyway.)

If, on a hit to the infield, with no one on first, you are clearly caught at third, don't run to that base to be tagged out—run up and down between the bases, allowing the batter time to go to second.

When a long fly ball is hit, return to your base and, calculating on your own speed, etc., try to go to third as the fielder catches the ball—remembering to slide, as, of course, since you are not forced, the baseman must touch you.

Watch every opportunity to go to third on a passed ball or on error.

Two out. Score on all hit balls. Do not attempt to steal third unless you can do so easily without risk, for you can score from second on a hit as well as from third.

RUNNER ON THIRD

When occupying third base, play outside of the base-line, because a ball which hits you there will not put you out, for you will be on foul ground.

Always lead well up the base-line on the pitcher's delivery so as to score on a short passed ball or any other misplay. But do not run away up the base-line upon the pitcher's wind-up motion, and then, as he delivers the ball to the batter, start back to third, knowing that you are beyond your safe distance. By doing this you lose all opportunity to score on a misplay, because you are going in the wrong direction.

Never leave third base (unless there are two out) on any kind of a long fly or line hit to the outfield until you see that the ball is either caught

or dropped or is a base-hit. *If it is a base-hit you can almost walk home* safely; if the fly is dropped, you can score easily; and if the fly is caught, you are in a position to score after the catch. Many base-runners start home on line drives or fly balls that are caught. They are therefore compelled to return and touch third after the ball is caught, thus throwing away their opportunity to score; for the fielder, with this assistance on the runner's part, can easily get the ball home ahead of the runner.

None out. Play safely. If the infield is playing in close to get you at the plate and the ball is hit to an infielder, do not try to score; let him throw the batter out at first (you will have two chances left in which to score). But if the infield is playing deep, your chances to score are increased—especially on a slow hit ball; then take a chance at scoring.

If there is a man on third and one on second—none out—and the game is nearing its close, and the run on third is the winning run, the man on third should come home fast on the hit; for if he is caught at the home-plate the man on second will go to third, and his run can yet win the game. On the other hand, if two runs are needed to win (under the above conditions), play safely, letting the fielder throw the batter out

at first, and leaving second and third occupied by runners as before the hit.

One out. If the ball is hit to the infield, go home at top speed; but if you are plainly out at home, stop and run up and down the line, compelling the catcher and third-baseman to make as many throws as possible; thereby enabling the batter to reach second base before you are put out. (The batter must watch for this play, and lose no time in getting to second base, from which position he can score on a base-hit.)

Two out. Get a good lead—be going toward home as the ball is pitched (be ready to return to third if the catcher throws there) and watch for the slightest opportunity to score.

Sometimes, if the pitcher has a long, slow wind-up, a speedy man can steal home by getting a fast start as the pitcher winds up.

Score on all hit balls, whether they are hit on the ground or in the air.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD

With the bases occupied in this manner, it is usually a case of the man on third out-guessing the catcher. (When several runs behind, play safely and wait for the hit to score you.)

There are several ways of playing the man on third to score:

(1) As the man on first starts for second, the man on third starts for home. Then, if the catcher throws to second—whether the throw be intercepted by the second-baseman or not—the man on third can score easily. Of course, if the catcher only feints to throw and holds the ball (or throws to the pitcher), the man is clearly out at home. That is the chance that must be taken. (It is a play that is usually made by slow runners, and is either a very successful one or a flat failure.)

(2) The man takes a good lead off third and, as the man on first starts for second, notes what the catcher does. If the catcher throws to second, he dashes for the plate. (The success of this play depends upon the speed of the runner and the manner in which the ball is thrown from the plate and returned to it.)

(3) If one run is needed very badly and there are two out (with a poor batter up), the following play may be attempted: The runner on first takes an unusually big lead (the man on third, observing the lead, diagnoses the play and is ready to do his part); then, if the pitcher throws to first, the man starts for second; on the instant that the first-baseman draws his arm back to throw to second the man on third runs for home. The same play may be made somewhat differently: While the pitcher has the ball the runner starts

for second; then, as the pitcher turns to throw to second, the man scores from third.

On all of the above plays (except when there are two out), if the man is clearly out at home, he should stop and run up and down the line between home and third to give the runner from first time to get to third.

Whenever there are more runners than one on bases, each runner should always watch the man ahead. If he goes to the next base, he should be followed by the man behind him, as the head runner will usually attract the attention of the opponents. The following misplay, where three hits and no runs are made in one inning, is frequently made because the second man on base fails to watch the man ahead of him: First man up singles; second man singles (men on first and second, no one out); the third man up makes a short, clean hit to the outfield, the man on second stops at third; while the man who was on first continues on to third, thinking (without looking to see) that the man ahead of him is scoring. Of course, the man who was on first is put out. The next man up hits into a double play.

THE DELAYED STEAL

(See Team Play 24.) This play is made by a runner on first base. It can be made successfully

only against a catcher who works automatically, that is, who catches and returns the ball to the pitcher without watching the runner. The runner on first takes a good lead but does not start for second until the catcher has the ball; then, just as the catcher is making his motion of returning the ball to the pitcher, the runner starts for second—before the ball has left the catcher's hand. The catcher must then draw his arm back again to throw to second, taking a full swing. The short-stop and second-baseman are often caught unprepared.

COACHING ON FIRST AND THIRD BASES

Although the coacher cannot touch the runner, yet it is very important that there be men stationed on the coaching lines at first and third bases to give instructions to the runners. Third-base coaching is the more important, very frequently games being won or lost according to the judgment of this coacher. It is advisable to use a set of signals given by motion of the hands in directing the play of a runner coming to third base. He must be told either to slide to third, or stop there, or continue home.

The position of a man coaching on third base should *not* be in a direct line between second and third but at a point ten or fifteen feet from third

toward home-base. From this position he will be able to watch at the same time the runner and the ball. As soon as possible the coacher should decide whether or not it is safe to send the runner home and should instantly direct him accordingly. He must know the game thoroughly, and must have a quick eye to judge distances and a quick brain in giving directions. He should only let the man score when, in his judgment, the stage of the game or inning, speed of runner, and position of ball justify the attempt.

FIRST-BASE COACHER'S REMARKS TO THE
RUNNER, FIRST BASE OCCUPIED

"Hold your base until the pitcher is on the rubber."

"Get a good lead."

"Look out for a throw from the catcher."

"Watch the second-baseman coming in behind you."

"Stop a double play."

"Half-way on short fly balls."

"Two men out, run on everything (hit)."

"Go to second on a long fly."

COACHER'S REMARKS, SECOND BASE OCCUPIED

"Watch the ball."

"Lead up with the pitcher's motion."

"Don't go back unless the pitcher turns to throw."

"Half-way on close fly balls."

"No one out, play it safe."

"Steal on a long fly to right field."

"One out—get the jump and score on a hit."

"Two out—score on everything."

COACHER'S REMARKS, THIRD BASE OCCUPIED

"Hold the base until pitcher gets on the rubber."

"Follow the pitch."

"Keep on foul ground."

"Be ready for a short passed ball."

"Hold your base on fly balls to outfield."

"No one out—play it safe."

"One out—score on infield hit."

X

TEAM PLAYS

THE REASONS FOR THE INFIELD ASSUMING VARIOUS POSITIONS ON THE DIAMOND

When the entire infield is playing back there is a comparatively small space through which the ball can be hit safely (on the ground). Nearly all balls that are not "line drives," that is, balls hit with terrific speed, are readily handled by the infielders. And even on very hard hit balls the short-stop and second-baseman are able to cover considerable ground; of course, the farther back the first-baseman and third-baseman play, the more ground they can cover. (See Diagram IX, page 203.) Take, for instance, Team Play No. 1, following, where, with three on base, the entire infield plays back. Here they have raised to the maximum the chances of stopping all hit balls and of retiring the runners either singly or by double plays.

When the entire infield plays in (see Diagram X, page 203), they have come so close to the batter that they have no time to judge hard hit balls—

and unless the ball be hit directly at them they cannot handle it; they have reduced to the minimum their ability to cover ground. Therefore, with a man on third (or first, second, and third, etc.), instead of playing in at all times to prevent the men from scoring, it is sometimes wiser to allow the run to score while playing back in hopes of making a double play—or retiring one man and preventing *more* than one run from scoring. We will take up Team Play No. 1 again. Here, if the infielders play in (when their side can spare two runs and still be ahead) and try to cut off one man at the plate, they run grave risks of having the ball hit through them, scoring two men and leaving a man on first and second and no one retired by the play.

For illustration of how much more ground the infield can cover when playing back than while playing in, see Diagram XI, page 204.

In play No. 2 (following) the men are again shifted. These positions combine to a marked degree the efficiency of both playing back and playing in (but reducing the ability of the first-baseman and third-baseman to cover ground). Here the first-baseman, third-baseman, and pitcher are in positions either to retire the runner at home-base or to make the double play, while the short-stop and second-baseman, in playing back,

are protecting their team against the ball's being hit through their positions; that is, balls on their left or right or into the air, which they could not have handled had they been playing in. The short-stop and second-baseman are also in position to make the double play. In Team Play 5 the short-stop and second-baseman, by playing only a few paces back of the base-line, are able either to make the double play at second and first or to retire the runner at home if the ball be hit sharply at them.

The supreme object, of course, is to win the game; this can be done as well by one run as by ten; therefore the players should take advantage of everything that will decrease their opponents' chances of obtaining an insurmountable lead.

The directions in the following plays have all been given in careful consideration of these principles.

The infielders, in assuming their positions, should always take into consideration the speed of the base-runners and the hitting tendencies and speed of the batsman. The left side of the diamond should give ground before a hard left-field hitter; and the right side should give ground before a hard right-field hitter. In contemplating making a double play, the infielders should move in a few paces if the base-runners are fast men.

In the following plays the directions to the infield to "play back" or "play in" are to be construed as follows: To play back means that the first-baseman, second-baseman, short-stop, and third-baseman assume their positions well back of the base-lines—the same as they do when there are no runners on bases. (See Diagram IX, page 203.) To play in means that these infielders assume their positions inside of the diamond, a few paces from the base-lines. (See Diagram X, page 203.)

TEAM PLAYS

(1) When the team in the field is THREE OR MORE RUNS AHEAD and the opposing side has THREE MEN ON BASES (none, one, or two out), the infield should play back at all stages of the game, taking the chance of making a double play. (See Diagram IX, page 203.)

(2) When the team in the field is TWO RUNS AHEAD and the opposing side has THREE MEN ON BASES (none or one out), the infield, at all stages of the game, should play as follows: The first-baseman (three or four paces) off the base, and a few paces back of the base-line. (If the batsman is a dead right-field hitter, play a deeper position.) The first-baseman should make his double play at home and first, if possible. The third-base-

man should play on the base-line, making his double play at home and first, if possible. (If the batsman is a hard left-field hitter, move back a few paces.) The short-stop and second-baseman should play back; if possible, making their double play at second and first. The pitcher should try to make his double play at home and first.

When two are out, the entire infield should play back, retiring the runner at the easiest base. (See Diagram IX, page 203.)

In the above conditions, some teams play their first-baseman on the base, holding the runner up. But, on the pitcher's wind-up motion, both the runner and the baseman move away from the base; and since the baseman is in motion when the ball is hit, he is handicapped in covering ground to his left. On the other hand, by playing off his base, the first-baseman is enabled to cover ground on both sides, at the same time allowing the runner only an ordinary lead. (If the runner persists in taking a big lead, he can be driven back by throws from the catcher.)

(3) When the team in the field is ONE RUN AHEAD and the opposing side has THREE MEN ON BASE, with *none out*, the infield for the first five innings can take positions and play the same as directed in play No. 2. After the fifth inning the

entire infield should play in to retire the runner at home. (See Diagram X, page 203.)

In the above conditions, WITH ONE OUT, play the same as in No. 2 for the first seven innings, after which, play in. (Some teams extend this method of play, with one out, through the entire game; short-stop and second-baseman playing only three or four paces back of the base-line to facilitate the making of the double play.)

When two are out, play back.

(4) With THREE ON BASE, *none out*, and the SCORE EVEN, the infield can play for the first five innings the same as directed in No. 2, except that the first-baseman plays on the line a few paces off the base. (After the fifth inning, the entire infield should play in to retire the runner at home.)

With one out, and a slow-running batsman at the plate, the above method of playing back may be extended for a few more innings.

(5) When the team in the field is ONE RUN BEHIND and the opposing side has THREE MEN ON BASE, with one or none out, the infield for the first five innings should play as follows: The first-baseman on the line, a few paces from the base; third-baseman on the base-line; the short-stop and second-baseman a few paces back of the base-line. (After the fifth inning the infield plays in to retire the runner at the plate.)

When two are out, play back.

(6) When the team in the field is THREE RUNS AHEAD and the opponents have A RUNNER ON FIRST and ONE ON THIRD, the first-baseman should hold the runner close to the base, while the rest of the infield plays back, trying for the double play at second and first. Under the same conditions, WHEN THE TEAM IN THE FIELD IS TWO RUNS AHEAD, the infield can play the same as above except that the third-baseman should play on the line. If there IS NONE OUT, the runner should be retired at home if possible. *With one man out*, make the double play at second and first if possible. With two out, third-baseman moves back—make the easiest play—either at second or first.

(7) When the team in the field is ONE RUN AHEAD and the opposing side has A RUNNER ON FIRST AND THIRD, with NONE OUT, the infield for the first five or six innings can take their positions as directed in No. 2, except that here the first-baseman always holds the runner close to the base, moving out into the diamond as the pitcher throws to the batter. Now, however, more attention should be paid to the runner on third, and he should be retired at home if possible. (But only by the first-baseman, third-baseman, or pitcher.) If the runner cannot be retired at home, the

double play at second and first should be tried for. But if there is no chance of getting the ball to second ahead of the runner, the batter should be retired at first.

After the fifth or sixth inning the short-stop and second-baseman should play a few paces ahead of the base-line to retire the runner at home-plate or make the double play, at the same time protecting themselves against a stolen base.

When the bases are occupied as above and the score is the same, WITH ONE OUT, the short-stop and second-baseman play back for the first seven innings. After that they should play in to retire the runner at home-plate. Some teams extend this method of play—with first and third baseman in, and short-stop and second-baseman three or four paces back of the base-line—WHEN ONE IS OUT—through the entire game, according to the speed of the batter and the possibility of involving him in a double play. This, however, must be left to the discretion of the individual manager or captain. When two are out, all except the first-baseman play back.

(8) WHEN THE SCORE IS TIED (even) and there is a RUNNER ON FIRST AND THIRD—none out—for the first five innings the infield should play as follows: First-baseman always holds the runner

close to the base; the third-baseman on the base-line; short-stop and second-baseman three or four paces back of the line. (After the fifth inning, short-stop and second-baseman move in.)

With one out, short-stop and second-baseman play back for seven innings, after which move in. Two out, all except first-baseman play back.

(9) When the team in the field is ONE RUN BEHIND and opposing side has A RUNNER ON FIRST AND THIRD, the first-baseman should remain on his base, the third-baseman play in, and in the early stages of the game short-stop and second-baseman play on or a few paces back of the base-line. Put the runner out at home if possible; otherwise try to make the double play. During the last part of the game, the entire infield should play in to retire the runner at home.

(10) When the team in the field is THREE RUNS AHEAD and the opposing side has a RUNNER ON SECOND AND THIRD, the entire infield should play back; the pitcher or third-baseman can sometimes retire the runner at home.

With the bases occupied as above, when the team in the field is *two runs ahead*, the first-baseman should play off the base about half the distance which he plays when no one is on base, the third-baseman should play on the base-line; short-stop and second-baseman should play back. In

the last inning, however, when one or two are out, the infield should all play back. (See Diagram IX, page 203.)

(11) When the team in the field is ONE RUN AHEAD and the opposing side has a RUNNER ON SECOND AND THIRD (one or more out), for the first three or four innings the first-baseman should play three or four paces off the base on the base-line; short-stop and second-baseman, half their regular distance back of the base-line; the third-baseman on the base-line. (When two are out, play back.)

After the fourth inning the entire infield should play in. (When two are out, play back.) Even when ONE RUN BEHIND, in the above conditions, it has often been found a good policy to play the infield half-way back, as above, during the early stages of the game—especially with a hard-hitting batsman up or a slow runner on third.

(12) When the team in the field is TWO OR MORE RUNS AHEAD and the opposing side has a RUNNER ON THIRD BASE only, the entire infield should play back, sacrificing the run to retire the batter at first, if the man cannot be put out easily at home. But when ONE RUN AHEAD, or when BEHIND, or when the SCORE IS EVEN (one or none out), the infield should always play in to retire the runner at the home-plate. When two are out, all

play back to retire the batter at first. Under all other conditions, with the tying or winning run on third, the infield should play in.

SUMMARY OF THE ABOVE DIRECTIONS TO THE TEAM IN THE FIELD

(For handy reference, letters correspond to the numbers.)

Before using the following, read detailed plays above.

(a) *When three or more runs ahead*, infield play back.

(b) **THREE ON BASE.** *When two runs ahead, one or none out*, infield play as follows: first-baseman off base few paces back of line; third-baseman on line; short-stop and second-baseman back. Two out, all play back.

(c) *When one run ahead, none out*, for the first five innings play as in *b*, then play in. *One out*, play as in *b* for seven innings, then play in. Two out, all play back.

(d) *When the score is even, none out*, for the first five innings play as in *b*, then play in. *One out*, slow batter, play as in *b* for six or seven innings. Two out, all play back.

(e) *When one run behind, one or none out*, for five innings first-baseman off base on line, third-baseman on line, short-stop and second-baseman

few paces back of line. After fifth inning short-stop and second-baseman come in. Two out, all back.

(f) *RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD.* When three or more runs ahead, first-baseman hold up runner; rest of infield play back.

When two runs ahead, play as above with third-baseman in. None out, retire runner at plate, if possible, otherwise double play. One out, same play. Two out, all except first-baseman back.

(g) *When one ahead, none out,* first-baseman on base, other players same as *b* for five or six innings. After sixth inning short-stop and second-baseman a few paces ahead of the line. With one out, short-stop and second-baseman play back for seven innings, then come in.

(h) *When the score is even, none out* (for first five innings), third-baseman on the line, short-stop and second-baseman back. After the fifth inning short-stop and second-baseman move in. With one out, short-stop and second-baseman play back for seven innings, then move in. Two out, all except the first-baseman play back. The first-baseman must always under these conditions hold the runner on first.

(i) *When one run behind,* in the early stages of the game, third-baseman in, short-stop and second-baseman on or just back of the line, the

rest of the game play in. First-baseman always holding runner on first.

(j) RUNNERS ON SECOND AND THIRD.—*When three runs ahead*, play back. *When two runs ahead*, first-baseman half back, third-baseman on the line, short-stop and second-baseman back. Last inning, one or two out, all back.

(k) *When one run ahead*, none or one out, for three or four innings first-baseman on the line, short-stop and second-baseman half-way back of line, third-baseman on the line. After the fourth inning, play in. *When one run behind*, for first few innings play as above if batter warrants it.

(l) RUNNER ON THIRD. *When two or more runs ahead*, play back. Under all other conditions, one or none out, play in; two out, all back.

(13) When the side in the field is THREE OR MORE RUNS AHEAD, and the opposing side has a runner on FIRST and SECOND, the infield should play back. Yet in the early stages of the game the first and third baseman should be prepared for a bunt.

With the bases occupied as above, the infield, under all conditions except when three or more ahead, with NONE OUT, should play as follows: first-baseman on his base (ready to go in for the bunt); third-baseman on the line (also ready for the bunt); short-stop and second-baseman back

(but holding the runner close to second). WHEN ONE IS OUT, the first-baseman can move half-way back—the rest of the infield all the way back (if speedy man is at bat, watch for a bunt). Two out, first-baseman goes all the way back also.

TEAM PLAYS—OFFENSE AND DEFENSE

The following plays, if perfected, will help to develop the team-work of a club. These plays (and others that can be worked out with careful study) should be learned both offensively and defensively; that is, a team should know how to play them or prevent their being played.

The signs that are used in the following plays are only given as examples—each team should decide upon its own signs.

(14) *The play from pitcher to second base to catch the runner off that base.* This play may be made in two ways:

(a) Pitcher stands on the rubber, looking at the catcher; short-stop or second-baseman gives the catcher a sign (such as picking up dirt or rubbing the leg) and then starts for the base; instantly, as the short-stop starts for the base, the catcher gives the pitcher a sign (such as rubbing his leg with his hand), whereupon the pitcher whirls and throws to second base.

(b) The pitcher looks over his shoulder at his

short-stop or second-baseman, the latter gives the pitcher a sign (such as a nod of the head), and starts for second—instantly the pitcher throws to second.

Both methods require much practice before the play can be made successfully.

Defense for the above play. The runner at second should always take a lead off the base that will allow him time to get back to the base safely as the pitcher turns to throw to the base. Watch the pitcher.

(15) *Runner on second, none out; a play to put the runner out at third.* When the batter is expected to make a sacrifice bunt (see Play 19), the short-stop drives the runner back to the base (by running as though to cover the base); then, as the runner goes back to the base, the pitcher puts a good ball over the plate as batter bunts. The pitcher and first-baseman run in, and, upon getting the ball, throw to third. The runner will have been delayed long enough at second to be thrown out at third. This is a dangerous play, therefore it should only be used occasionally, since the batter may hit through short-stop if the position is open.

Defense for above play. The runner at second should never run back to the base unless the pitcher turns to throw to the base; the runner

should always be leading toward third base as the pitcher delivers the ball to the batter.

(16) *Play from catcher to pitcher to second base to catch runner off that base.* This play can be worked when the catcher has received the ball from the pitcher; the pitcher walks carelessly toward the catcher, who throws him the ball— instantly as the pitcher gets the ball the short-stop starts for the base and the pitcher snaps the ball to second.

Defense. Runner on second always play it safe. Return to the base as the pitcher receives the ball from the catcher, again getting your lead as the pitcher takes his position on the rubber (his back toward you).

(17) *Runners on first and second, or first, second, and third. A play to get the runner off first if he is taking a big lead.* First-baseman, if playing off his base behind runner, gives catcher the signal (such as a slight twist of the gloved hand—to make it safe, the catcher should return the same signal to the baseman), the catcher then calls for a waste ball; as the catcher receives the ball the first-baseman starts for the base, the catcher throwing to first instantly upon receiving the ball.

Defense. Runner on first should take a lead off the base of such a distance that he can get back to the base safely if the catcher throws—

and he should always go back to the base swiftly as the catcher receives the ball.

(18) *Runner on first (or first and second), none out, and the batter is expected to bunt.* (See Play 19.) *A play to get the runner off first.* Second-baseman gives catcher signal (catcher returns same), catcher calls for a waste ball; as pitcher delivers the ball, the first-baseman leaves his base and runs toward the batter (evidently to field the bunt), at the same time the second-baseman runs to first to take the ball from the catcher who throws upon catching the ball. The same play may be made in which the first-baseman either merely feints to go in for the bunt—or remains on his base, receiving the ball himself from the catcher.

Defense. Same as on the above play.

WHEN TO BUNT TO ADVANCE BASE-RUNNERS

(19) Unless otherwise stated, the following directions hold good in all baseball.

(a) *Runner on first base, none out, one run needed to win.* During the last two or three innings, bunt. (Weak hitters should bunt even in the early part of the game.)

Reason: to avoid the double play and to put the runner on second base, where he can be scored by a single (one-base hit).

In amateur baseball, it is advisable to bunt at all stages of the game in the above circumstances.

(b) *Runner on first base, none out, two runs behind.* In amateur baseball, during the first four or five innings, bunt.

Reason: to avoid double plays, trying for one run inning after inning.

(c) *Runner on first base, none out, when ahead, hit.* In amateur baseball, unless away ahead—continue to bunt, constantly trying for one more run.

(d) *Runner on second base, none out, one run needed to tie the score or win.* Unless the batsman is a good hitter, always bunt.

Reason: to advance the base-runner to third base, where, with the infield in, he will have six chances to score. The chances to score would occur in any of the following cases: a fly ball, a base-hit, an error, a passed ball, a wild pitch, or the squeeze play.

Defense. The pitcher, unless the batter is a good hitter, could attempt Play No. 15.

(e) *Runner on second, none out.* Amateur teams should bunt even when one or two runs ahead.

(f) *Runners on first and second, none out, one run needed to tie the score or win.* Bunt at all stages of the game.

(g) *Runners on first and second, none out, two runs behind.* Bunt.

Reason: to get runners on second and third bases, with two chances to score both on a base-hit.

(h) *Runners on first and second, none out.* If one or two runs ahead, and the batter is a poor hitter or slow runner, he should *bunt* (otherwise hit).

(i) *Runners on first and second, one out, one or two runs needed.* It may seem peculiar to advise bunting under these circumstances, but if the pitcher is at bat and is a poor hitter, he might as well deliberately sacrifice himself to put men on second and third, instead of running the risk of hitting into a double play.

(20) When a player is fielding his position according to the battery signals (given to the pitcher by the catcher), he must not move prematurely. The batter, seeing him shift, would probably know what ball to expect. (Batters should note any change of position on the part of the fielders before the pitcher delivers the ball.)

(21) *The push or drag hit.* This play is accomplished when the short-stop and second-baseman are playing back. The batsman taps the ball just hard enough to get it past the pitcher on

either side. A fast man, especially a left-handed batter, can frequently beat the ball to first base on this play. This play may be used in connection with Play No. 22.

Defense. The short-stop, and especially the second-baseman, can in a measure prevent this play from succeeding by playing a little closer to the base-line when batters who have made this play successfully are hitting. A close watch over the batter's motions will also enable the fielder to anticipate this play, since the batter in attempting it will not take his usual swing at the ball.

(22) *The hit-and-run play.* (a) In this play the batter hits the ball while the base-runner is stealing a base, either from first to second or from second to third. By prearranged signal, the runner starts for the next base as the pitcher delivers the ball to the batter; and the batter makes an effort to hit the ball. Here the batter should not swing hard at the ball; he should concentrate his attention upon meeting the ball and driving it, if possible, behind the runner, thus reducing the opportunity of the opponents making a double play. In order to make this play successfully, it is necessary for the batter to have the ball thrown within hittable distance of the plate; therefore the batter should attempt the play only when he expects a good ball.

The signals in this play may be given either by the batsman or the base-runner; or the play may be made without any signals—the batsman hitting the ball as he sees the runner stealing. The hit-and-run play is a good one when used by reasonably sure hitters. It frequently enables the base-runner, because of his running start, to go an extra base on a hit and, for the same reason, makes difficult the execution of a double play.

Defense. The only possible defense against the hit-and-run play is to have the pitcher hold the runner close to the base, and the catcher try to diagnose the play, calling for the waste ball when he thinks the play is coming. The waste ball will prevent the batter from hitting the ball, thereby enabling the catcher to throw to the base to catch the runner. Here it is a battle of wits between the pitcher and the opposing batsman and base-runner.

(b) Another method of putting the hit-and-run play into effect is the following: As the runner on first starts for second, the batsman bunts the ball toward the third-baseman. This compels the third-baseman to leave his base and come in after the ball, and, if the runner on first is fast, he can frequently go to third base while the third-baseman is playing the ball to first.

(c) The hit-and-run play may be made by using the push or drag hit in the following way: As the runner on first steals, the batter bunts or pushes the ball past the pitcher on the short-stop side. Then, if the short-stop is covering second base (seeing the man steal), it will be difficult to retire either the base-runner or the batsman.

HIT-AND-RUN SIGNALS

Following are a few suggestive systems of signals that may be used in the hit-and-run play, preferably given by the batter. (Each team, however, should adopt a system of its own.) The batter should give the signal to his base-runner at a time when he knows the runner can watch him; for instance, when the runner is returning to his base, after making a safe hit, or when the ball goes into the catcher's hands. When the runner sees the signal, he steals on the next ball pitched, knowing that batter will endeavor to hit it.

(a) The batter wipes his hand in some particular way on some particular place on his uniform.

(b) The batter opens and closes either hand as he holds the bat.

(c) Some natural movement of either foot.

(d) Wiping the trousers with the hand may be

used as the hit-and-run signal, when the bat is held in some particular position.

(e) The base-runner can select the signal to be used by the batter. For instance, as the base-runner returns to his base, he can make a series of natural motions, any one of which (by pre-arrangement) can be selected as the signal. For illustration, suppose that it is agreed that the second motion made by the base-runner be used as the signal. Then as the runner returns to the base he adjusts his hat, then pulls up his trousers, and then rubs his chin. At once the batter will know that when he wants to signal for the hit-and-run, he must pull up his trousers. The base-runners, of course, should vary these motions each time they are on base; and the batter should watch closely.

The above sets of signals (or signals similar to them) may be adopted by the club as a whole; or individual batters may have separate sets of signals to be used with the preceding batter and the one following.

(23) *The squeeze play.* This play consists in the batter bunting the ball while the runner on third base is on his way home. By a prearranged signal (generally given by the batter) the runner starts for home just as the pitcher begins the forward part of his motion to deliver

the ball to the batter, then the batter bunts the ball.

The success of the play depends both upon the runner and the batter. If the runner starts too soon, giving the pitcher time to diagnose the play and throw the ball accordingly, there is little chance of the batter being able to bunt. But if the runner starts at the right time, the pitcher will have gone too far in his motion of delivering the ball to throw it out of the batter's reach. The batter should be intent only upon bunting the ball. If he has in mind the idea of reaching first base safely, he will generally fail to bunt the ball. Therefore he should never mind himself, but look only to making the bunt.

The reason this play is not used more is that the players cannot bunt and will not learn to bunt.

If there are runners on second and third as the squeeze play is made, the runner on second, since he too sees the squeeze-play signal, can get a running start on the pitcher's motion and, if the ball is bunted toward the third-baseman, can score as the ball is being thrown to first. But if the ball is played home, and the man going home sees that he is clearly out, he should stop and run up and down the line, allowing the batter time to go to second.

Defense. The only method of breaking up the squeeze play is for the pitcher to use a slow wind-

up motion, all the while watching the runner on third base. He will often start home before the pitcher has delivered the ball, in which case the pitcher should throw the ball signalled by the catcher; if the curve ball is called it should be thrown wide and low, out of the batter's reach; and if the fast ball is called it should be thrown high and wide or in line with the batter's head. The pitcher, if the man is going home, should always throw the ball called for by his catcher, otherwise the catcher is liable to miss the ball entirely. For instance, if the catcher has called for a curve, he will be ready to handle its sharp break; and if the pitcher were to throw a fast ball, the catcher would be deceived, and probably unable to handle it, especially if it came high.

Squeeze-play signals. Some teams use the same signal for the squeeze play and the hit-and-run play. For instance, if there is a runner on third base and one on first, the hit-and-run signal always calls for a squeeze play.

Other teams, especially those that seldom use the squeeze play, have a separate signal for the squeeze play and one for the hit-and-run. Then, with runners on first and third, the hit-and-run signal applies only to the runner on first base, while the squeeze-play signal works with the runner on third.

The squeeze-play signals may be of the same general nature as those used in the hit-and-run play.

(24) *The delayed steal.* This play can be made successfully only against a catcher who works automatically, that is, who catches and returns the ball to the pitcher without watching the runner.

The runner on first base takes a good lead off the base, but does not start for second until the catcher has the ball; then, just as the catcher is making his motion of returning the ball to the pitcher, but before the ball has left the catcher's hand, the runner starts for second. The catcher must then draw his arm back again, making a full swing before throwing, and this delay is what helps the runner to beat the ball to second base.

Defense. When there is a runner on first base, the catcher should glance at him before beginning the forward motion of his arm in returning the ball to the pitcher. This action will assist the catcher in preventing the runner from making the delayed steal.

(25) When you are two or more runs ahead, do not take difficult chances of retiring runners occupying bases. For instance, with first base occupied, if the ball is hit to the first-baseman, he should not try for the double play unless the chances of making it are all in his favor. Other-

wise he may lose the decision at second if the play be close; or in throwing to second he might hit the runner with the ball, making both men safe. Rather than take these chances, retire the batter at first base; there will then be one out, and a man on second, requiring a base-hit to score him.

(26) When the pitcher is using the "moist ball," the infielders, upon handling cleanly a hard hit ball, should rub the ball quickly in their hands before throwing. This action will dry the ball, thus eliminating the possibility of a bad throw.

(27) In the last inning (one out), with the winning run on third base, instead of trying to shut the run off at home, the infield can play in, while the pitcher deliberately gives the next two batters bases on balls. Then with three men on base the infield can go back and try for a double play, retiring the side. The reason for the infield playing in until the bases are all occupied by runners is to protect themselves in case the batter should be able to hit the ball. The pitcher should deliberately fill the bases, because his infield, by playing in, has increased infinitely the batter's chances of hitting safely. One run will win the game anyway, and the runner that will make it is on third base to start with; now, by putting three men on bases and then playing back, the team has increased to the maximum the possibilities of preventing a hit being made—and of retiring the

side by a double play. This play is especially advisable when it will walk two good hitters and bring up a weak one.

(28) When, with the infield playing in to shut off the run at home, the ball is hit sharply and thrown home, catching the runner between home and third, the third-baseman should move toward home-base, thus making it possible to retire the runner without loss of time. The short-stop should cover third base. The play is made in this way to prevent the man from running up and down the whole base-line, thus gaining time for the batter in which to advance.

(29) *Battery signs.* Many college teams and semiprofessional clubs think that the more signs they have and the more complicated these signs are, the more proficient they are as teams, *i. e.*, they think they should have a sign for the fast ball, a sign for what they call the "in-shoot," one for the out-curve, one for the drop-curve, as well as signs for the moist ball and slow ball. Now, some of these signs are unnecessary and only tend to complicate matters; the fewer the signs, the less the possibility of confusion.

One sign is all that is necessary for the fast ball, whether it goes perfectly straight or tends to shoot. In fact, most fast balls tend to shoot a little in one direction or another, and the catcher is always ready for them. And one sign will do

for curve balls, that is, the out-curve, the drop-curve, and the out-drop. These curves are readily followed by the catcher; he need only know that one of them is coming to be able to catch any of them. It is absolutely necessary to have a separate and distinct sign for the moist ball, since that is the most puzzling ball for the catcher to handle. The pitcher can throw a slow ball without any sign. (But with an inexperienced pitcher it is sometimes necessary for the catcher to have a slow-ball sign; then the catcher, at his own discretion, can call the slow ball when the pitcher forgets to use it.) Another sign which the battery must use is that telling the pitcher to keep the ball out of the batter's reach; that is called the "waste-ball" or "pitch-out" sign. This ball should be fast and thrown two or three feet outside of the plate, and at the height of the catcher's head as he stands up. This ball is called for when the catcher calculates that a base-runner is going to steal, or when the catcher thinks that he has an opportunity to catch a runner off the base (napping). It is absolutely necessary to keep this ball out of the batter's reach, for if he should hit the ball while a man is stealing or a baseman is about to play a runner at his base, the infielders will be leaving their positions open, and the ball is likely to be hit through them.

The following are sets of signals that may be used by batteries (pitcher and catcher). These signals are given merely to suggest systems that may be used. Each team should work out and adopt its own signals. They are given preferably by the catcher who, facing the pitcher, assumes behind the plate a squatting position with knees slightly spread apart.

(a) Place the ungloved (bare) hand on the inside of the leg close to the body so that when the fingers are extended downward they will be visible only to players who are directly in front, *i. e.*, the pitcher, short-stop, and second-baseman. Then lay the glove flat in your lap, covering your bare hand.

One finger extended Fast ball

Two fingers extended Curve ball

One finger wriggled Moist ball

Two fingers wriggled Slow ball

Closed fist Waste ball (pitch-out)

(b) Place the open hand flat against your leg, close to body, covering with the glove as above.

Open hand flat against leg Fast ball.

Projecting thumb Curve ball.

Closed fist Moist ball.

Projecting thumb wriggled Slow ball.

Either hand on your knee as you rise

from your squatting position Waste ball.

(c) The following is a set of signals given by the eyes.* Place the hands on the mask so that the eyes are visible only to the players in front:

Looking straight at the pitcher.....Fast ball.
Looking to either side.....Curve ball.
Blinking eyes.....Slow ball.
Right eye closed.....Waste ball.
Left eye closed.....Moist ball.

When there is a runner on second base, the catcher should give his signal so that the runner cannot see them (otherwise the runner can flash them to the batter). The signals may be given to the pitcher when the short-stop or second-baseman is engaging the attention of the runner. It is sometimes advisable for the catcher to have a separate set of signals to be used with his pitcher when there is a runner on second base.

(30) When there is a runner on second base and a base-hit is made to the outfield, the first-baseman or the third-baseman, as the case may be, can intercept the throw from the outfielder if told to do so by the catcher, and can make the play at second, retiring the batter at that base. (Here the pitcher should back up home-base.) Otherwise the ball is allowed to go to the plate.

* Eye signals, though used by some teams, are likely to involve misunderstandings; therefore, when possible, it is advisable to use the other system.

This ball, if intercepted, should be caught at a point about fifty feet in front of the catcher.

Some teams have the pitcher intercept the ball on this play while the first-baseman backs up home-base. This, however, should be left to the individual manager or captain.

(31) The player who is to become the next batsman, by taking his position near home-base, can at times give valuable assistance as a coacher. For instance, when, with a runner on second base, the batsman makes a base-hit, the next batsman from his position behind home-plate is in an excellent position to judge, by the direction of the ball as it is being thrown home, whether or not to have the runner score.

(32) *Word signals.* Too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the fact that the manager (or, in amateur baseball, the captain) should observe very carefully and turn to his own account, when possible, everything that the opposing players do. From his position on the coaching lines or on the bench he should be keen to note and communicate to his players any line of offense or defense that may be laid open. And in order to do this, he must have a system of word signals. For example, any remark to the batsman containing the word *out* would instruct him to hit instead of bunt, and vice versa. ("Hit it out." "No one

out," etc.) Suppose that the manager, after he had instructed the batsman to bunt, observed that the third and first basemen were playing very close and were coming in to handle the bunt; then the manager by use of the word signal could switch the batter from bunting to hitting. By so doing he would catch the infielders unawares, and most likely get the ball safely past them. And again, suppose that the batter had been instructed to hit, and that he had hit a hard foul down the third-base line, the third-baseman calculating that he will hit again, drops back of the base-line several paces, thereby increasing his ability to handle hard-hit balls. Here, the watchful manager, knowing his batter's speed and his ability to bunt, and the third-baseman's fielding weaknesses, etc., can become effective. By the use of the word signal he can instruct the batter to bunt. Then if the bunt be laid down the third-base line, the chances are all in favor of the batsman.

This system of word signals may be used with base-runners also, and, in fact, it may be extended to various other departments of the game.

XI

HINTS TO COLLEGE PLAYERS

The following suggestions may be of interest and of some value to college players:

Have regular hours for study. If these are to be at night have them in the early part of the evening. "Think baseball" after you have prepared your *other* lessons. Do not start your study hour with baseball or you might find it difficult to get your mind down to your other studies. As far as is possible do your studying in the daytime, all kinds of artificial lights hurt the eyes.

If you are worrying over low standing in any subject or subjects, it may interfere in your thinking and playing baseball; tell the coach about it; he can generally help you in some way.

Do not become discouraged if you do not "make" the team as soon as you thought you would; keep working, drill yourself on your weak points, make them strong points.

Get plenty of rest during the baseball season, it will help you to get a better drive to your

bat and more "back" into your throws. If other students insist upon keeping you awake, "kick over the traces" and make them realize the injury they are doing you.

Do not sulk if you are not put on the regular team. If you think you are a better player than some other man, *work hard*, and show your coach that you are better.

Do not rebel against learning new ways of playing the game—generally a riper experience than you have had tells the coach that what he wants you to do is the best. The man who won't learn has to step aside finally for the man who will.

Never think that the baseball team is going to pass your examinations for you. If you are good enough to be on the team, you owe it to your college to stay there, so study regularly and hard.

Respect the older members of the team; but if you are out for a position, play your best, no matter whom you may have to oust.

Because your opponents come from a larger college than yours, do not think that they are necessarily better than you. Go in to win! Play baseball every minute!

Do not hesitate to offer suggestions to your coach and captain, but think these suggestions over carefully before making them. If it is some-

thing that they have overlooked, they will be glad to hear it. But be careful about pitting your judgment against theirs.

Drop any slipshod method of playing which you may have learned in school. In college you will be taught the best methods; learn them and, on every occasion, *think!*

Listen to what the coach has to say, no matter whether it applies to your position or not, for baseball knowledge will come in handy. If you know all that the other fellow knows, maybe you can outwit him when the occasion arises.

When you are to play on a strange field, go out on it before the game and look it over. Note the position of the sun, the condition of the grounds, whether the ground is lively or not; observe any obstructions, such as fences, stands, etc. Note what kind of a background you will have to look into; also observe any unusual condition of the wind; examine the base-lines, to see whether bunts will tend to roll foul or safe, etc.

Keep a note-book and put down in it the mistakes you have made, also the mistakes others make; this will help to fix in your mind the correct way these plays should be made.

Learn the rules. Study them carefully, over and over.

If there is any particular point about which

you are uncertain, ask the coach! Do not go along until the play comes up without knowing how to handle it.

Constant practice will strengthen you where you are weak. Get out on the field early and practise (such as outfielders handling ground balls, hitting a curved ball, or handling bunts).

If you have fallen off in your batting, study yourself; have the coach watch your motion at bat. There is generally a good reason for your "losing your stride." It may be that you are stepping too far, or hitting *up* at the ball, or pulling away, etc.

When you have made a mistake, admit it. (The best players make them.) But try not to repeat the same mistake.

Do not be ashamed to strike out, but do not strike out on called strikes. "Hit them when they are over."

Stop working before you are dead tired. You can't do your best when you are fagged out. Do not bat too long at a stretch, for your muscles lose their freshness and you can't get the necessary snap to your swing.

If you have a sore arm, tell the coach. You can't do yourself justice while working at this disadvantage.

While you are at bat, a touch of near-sighted-

ness or far-sightedness is frequently offset by a step nearer to the pitcher or a step away.

Do not crowd the plate if you can't hit a close ball.

Keep away from the score-book. Play the game the best you know how, and let the averages take care of themselves.

Very often weak wrists and arms (indicated by a longing for a light bat) are overcome by having a bat handy to swing in your room. Bore a hole in the end and insert a half pound of iron in it.

Avoid tobacco. It can't do you any *good*.

Remember that the professional is better than you because he devotes his entire time to thinking and playing baseball, while you have your college duties to perform (spending but a little time over ball). However, try to bring into your baseball some of that thinking ability which your college training is supposed to develop in you.

Your opportunities for studying your opponents are infinitely less in college than in professional baseball; therefore, observe very carefully what happens, and remember it. Note the directions in which the various batters hit, who the fast men are, etc.

Do not imitate the professional's vocabulary, or his walk—they won't improve your game; observe how he actually plays the game.

If your team wins, don't worry about your personal performances.

Avoid getting into the habit of quarrelling with the umpire—this habit never avails you anything. If he has made a mistake, he knows it; your telling him about it constantly may make you feel smart, but it won't help your team any.

A player's individual ability is often offset by his disorganizing effect on the team. Beware of dissension.

Next to being captain of the team, you should be a good follower.

Never be satisfied with your game, try to improve.

Remember that as a college man you are supposed to be a gentleman. Habits of rowdyism are not tolerated in professionalism; college environment should stamp them out automatically.

Give your opponents credit for a good play; you like to get it when you make a good one.

It is a good plan for the players to chum together when off the diamond—this produces a spirit of unity that can't be obtained in any other way.

Remember that when you are chosen to play on a college team you represent not only your particular student body but the whole host of

alumni and the friends and benefactors of the college. Therefore do not perform one act which will prevent you from being absolutely at your best—worthy of the trust placed in you.

XII

HINTS TO SPECTATORS

The incidents during a baseball game that have to do with its final outcome are many and various. The almost infinite number of possibilities, either attempted or neglected, which offer themselves in the nine innings, can scarcely be grasped even by the most trained observer. But many of the important things which affect the offense and defense—the success or failure of play—may be recognized by the average spectator when once his attention has been called to them. A knowledge of those points which are of vital importance to the players cannot fail of being interesting to the spectator. It is felt, therefore, that the following “hints” will help the spectator in placing proper significance upon the various acts of the players:

It will be observed that a certain few players always coach at first and third bases. These men are selected to do this work because their judgment in directing the base-runners is good. Many a game has been lost because the manager sent the wrong player out to coach.

The direction and strength of the wind are important factors in baseball. Observe the players, as they come on the field, tossing bits of grass or dust into the air, or looking at the flags to ascertain the direction of the wind.

Before the game observe the constant practice of receiving short taps from the bat. Four or five players in a group in turn throw the ball to a single batter. This rapid handling of the ball removes awkwardness, and is good training for batting and fielding.

When certain players are at bat, the outfielders may be seen to shift their positions. For instance, if a batter is known to hit the ball regularly to left field, the outfielders all move in that direction; then the pitcher, by keeping the ball well on the first-base side of the plate, will try to make the batter hit to right field—calculating that the batter will not hit effectively in that field. Some pitchers, however, try to make men hit to their favorite field, after placing the fielders in that field.

Some men are constantly swinging two or three bats. This is done to strengthen the forearms and wrists. After handling two or three bats, one bat seems quite light in the hands and can be swung more readily against a speedy ball.

Note the kind of balls thrown to the batters

in batting practice. If a left-handed pitcher is expected in the game, practice will be against a left-handed man, who will try to throw the same kind of balls that the opposing pitcher will throw.

Often the runner on first base will take a big lead off the base, without intending to steal, merely to worry the pitcher, who will keep throwing to catch him. This is frequently done against young or inexperienced pitchers, compelling them to lose their control.

When a runner is on first base and there are two out, note how many high, wide (waste) balls are thrown to the batter. This is done to enable the catcher to throw readily to second base, for the runner will usually attempt to steal when there are two out.

A team that is several runs behind will seldom bunt; it usually tries to hit the ball hard, taking the chance of getting as many runs as possible, instead of sacrificing to score one or two.

There is usually one ball with which a pitcher is most successful, sometimes it is in combination with another. It is interesting to try to discover wherein the pitcher's success lies.

When a runner is on first base, and there are none out, observe the kind of balls thrown to the batter. If the score is at all close, the pitcher generally expects the batter to bunt; therefore,

he usually keeps the ball high, in which place it is difficult to bunt successfully.

A pitcher who "has the batter" two strikes and no balls will generally make him go after a "bad" one. It is interesting to note with what kind of a ball the pitcher tries to catch his man napping.

When there are two out, and three balls and two strikes on the batter, all base-runners advance as the pitcher makes his motion to deliver the ball to the batter.

A team that is two or more runs ahead will seldom play the infield in; it is the safer policy to play back, allowing one run to score if necessary, in order to make a double play or to clear the bases.

When a runner is on third base (one or none out), the score being close, observe that the infield plays in to retire the runner at home-base. Many teams, however, restrict the playing of their infield in to the last part of the game, being contented in the early part of the game to keep the score as low as possible while making every effort to clean the bases or retire the side by a double play.

When a runner is on first base and a hit is made to right field, note the positions taken by the short-stop, left-fielder, and the pitcher. Since the ball will be fielded, usually, to third base, the short-stop should be in direct line with the ball

and should, if told to by the third-baseman, intercept it and throw to second to head off the runner there. (This is done if the third-baseman sees that the man going to third cannot be caught.) The pitcher should be backing up third base, as also should the left-fielder; an overthrow would then be handled and a score prevented.

It is interesting to watch the situation where there is a runner on first base and one on third. The team in the field usually makes every effort to prevent what is known as the "double steal," that is, the runner on third scoring as the runner goes from first to second. The pitcher is up against the proposition of keeping the runners close to their bases to prevent their getting big leads; he must also cut down his motion as much as possible, and yet must keep his control so as not to give the batter a good ball to hit—the ball must also be one which the catcher can readily get off to second base. The short-stop and second-baseman must be so placed as to play the ball either home or at second—and their actions are generally dependent upon whether the batter be a right or left handed hitter and what direction he usually hits in. The catcher may throw the ball to the pitcher, or to second base; or, after a feint to second, throw to third; sometimes throwing to third directly.

When a runner is on second base, and the batsman hits safely to the outfield, note where the pitcher plays; also note what the first-baseman does. Usually the first baseman backs up the catcher, while the pitcher places himself in direct line with the ball which is being thrown home. If told to do so by the catcher, the pitcher will intercept the ball and throw it to second base, attempting to catch the runner there. Some teams, however, prefer to have the pitcher back up home-plate, while the first-baseman places himself in line with the ball thrown home.

Observe how the team in the field plays when a runner on first base attempts to steal. On some teams, one man always covers second base, and the pitcher must use his control accordingly. For instance, if it is the second-baseman who covers the base, and the man at bat has a strong tendency to hit between first and second, the pitcher must place the ball so as to make him hit to the opposite side of the diamond; if the batsman hits right-handed, the ball must be kept close to him; and if he hits left-handed, it must be kept on the outside corner of the plate. On other teams, the second-baseman takes the base if the batsman is known to hit to the left, while the short-stop takes it if the batsman hits to the right. On free hitters the short-stop covers

second on all fast balls; and the second-baseman does so on all curved balls.

When a runner is on first base, and the batter hits into a double play, note what the catcher does. Since the ball, on this play, must be handled with great swiftness, there is a possibility of an overthrow at first, therefore the catcher's position should be back of first base. The same is true when, with none on base, a ball is hit slowly toward the second-baseman.

Often one will see players trying to soil a new ball. This is done to take the gloss off the cover so that the pitcher can control and curve the ball. Frequently, as the new ball is batted into the air, and while the eyes of the umpires and spectators are on the ball, the pitcher rubs his hand in the dirt. He can then remove the gloss from the ball when it is returned to him (without fear of penalty from the umpire).

Observe that outfielders look away from the sun as much as possible, either turning their backs or looking down when it is not necessary for them to watch the ball. This is quite a necessary precaution in an especially sunny field, as the strain on the eyes is very severe.

A pitcher never deliberately "walks" the first batter in any inning, regardless of the score.

Every batter has his "lucky way" of walking

up to the plate. Observe that some always walk in front, and some behind the umpire, usually performing some regular act, such as cleaning the dirt out of their spikes, wiping hands on the ground, hitting bat on the plate, etc.

When the batsman makes a long hit, observe that the basemen stand on their bases in such a way as to make the runner take the outside of the bases, thereby delaying him considerably.

When a runner is on second base, the short-stop usually runs him back to the base, and the pitcher, seeing the runner going back, delivers the ball to the batter. This play is made to throw the runner off his stride; he is going back toward second base as the ball is pitched, consequently lessening his chance of scoring on a safe hit.

Occasionally, when the above play is made (if there is none out and the batter is expected to bunt), the pitcher throws a perfect ball to the batter, then the first-baseman and pitcher run in to handle the bunt, which they throw to third, often catching the runner there because he was driven back to second as the ball was pitched.

Passed balls and wild pitches are frequently the result of misunderstanding between the pitcher and catcher—of getting their signals “crossed.” If the catcher calls for one kind of ball and the pitcher throws another, there is apt

to be trouble, especially if a low curve is called, and the pitcher throws a high fast ball. Spectators can usually detect this battery mistake, for the catcher squats, expecting a curve, while the ball generally shoots high and wide, out of his reach. A conference between the pitcher and catcher usually follows.

When the pitcher has lost his control, some player usually takes out time, by adjusting his uniform, or holding a conference with another player, etc.—anything to gain time during which the pitcher can get back his control (in the meantime the pitcher throws to the catcher or first-baseman). Frequently the captain will walk over to the pitcher and talk to him, trying to steady him.

Some managers “warm up” fresh pitchers where the man who is working can’t see them, since many pitchers, especially young ones, lose heart when they see another man ready to take their place.

Note the little tricks that are played to give the pitcher time to recover his breath after he has run several bases. The following are examples: The coacher pulls the batter away from the plate and whispers to him at length; another man is sent in to run for the pitcher, but suddenly the manager decides to let the pitcher run himself,

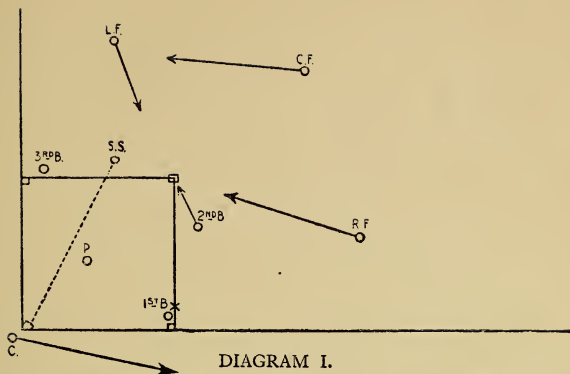
after the lapse of a few minutes; if the pitcher is about to start an inning, after running bases, the catcher throws the ball into centre field—anything to delay the game.

Outfielders should return the ball to the catcher so that he receives it on the first bound. Long throws to third base are made in the same way. This makes it possible for another fielder to intercept the ball if it is necessary; and it also gives the catcher or third-baseman a better opportunity to handle the ball.

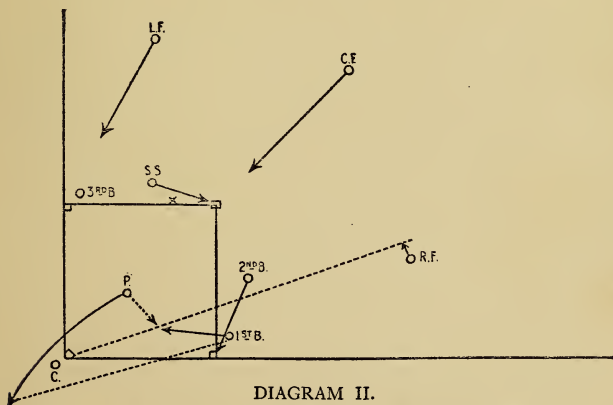
A clever play is sometimes made by a fast runner on third base. As the ball is hit toward second base the runner on third gets a late running start from the base, evidently trying to score. The fielder hurries the ball home, but the runner suddenly pulls up and goes back to third base, thereby making the runner on first and himself safe.

It is interesting to note the remarkably fast start toward second base many runners get by taking a turn before reaching first base; that is, they go out of the base-line and are headed for second base as they cross first.

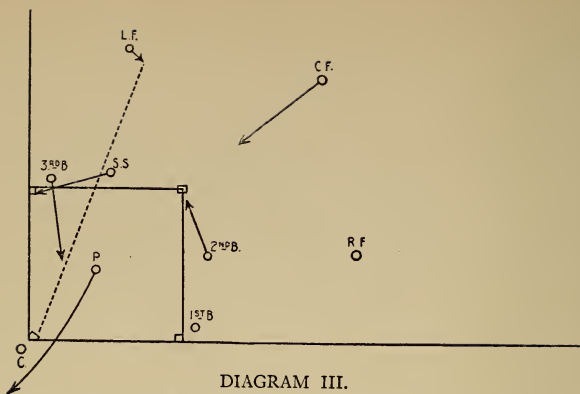
DIAGRAMS



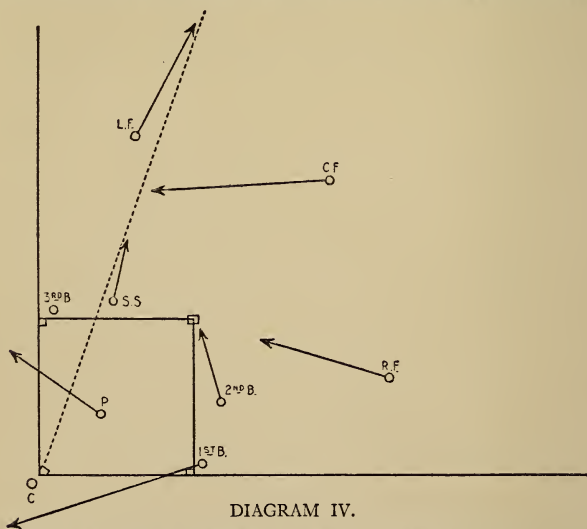
Showing the catcher backing up first base to recover overthrows, when, with a runner on first, the ball is hit to the short-stop or either position in the infield, and relayed from second to first—on the double play. It also shows the left and centre fielders getting in line with the hit ball to recover it if it gets by the short-stop. And it shows the right-fielder getting in line with the throw from the short-stop to second base to recover the ball if it is thrown wildly. On this play, the catcher should take a position about thirty feet from first base; he can then catch overthrows, and put out the batter, who will be going to second.



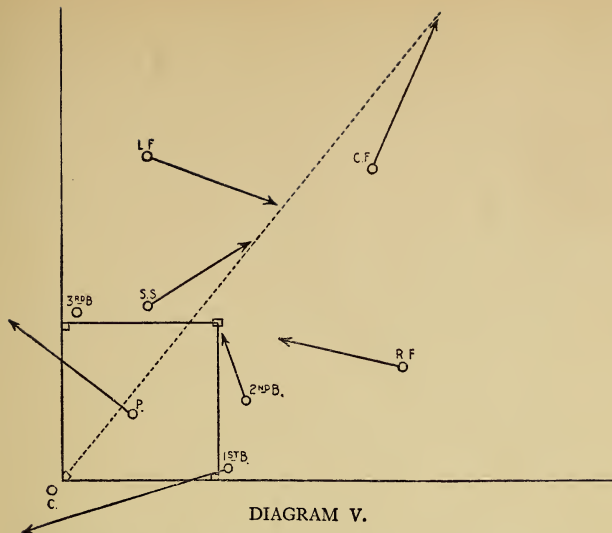
Showing a play being made after a base-hit to the right-fielder (with a runner on second). Heavy lines show one method of play; dotted lines (from pitcher and first-baseman) show another. Ordinarily, since the first-baseman is better in handling thrown balls, he should take his position inside of the diamond while the pitcher backs up the catcher. Many teams, nowever, play as indicated by the dotted lines. In either case, the second-baseman covers first, and the short-stop takes second; while the left-fielder backs up third base, and the centre-fielder backs up second base. On a hit to the centre-fielder, these same relative positions should be taken.



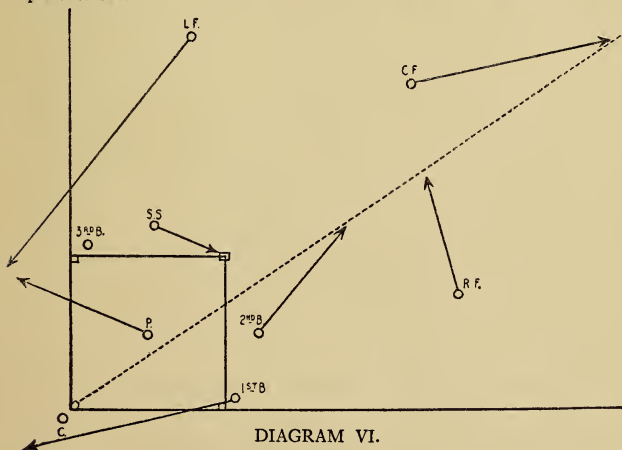
This diagram shows a play being made after a base-hit to left field (with a runner on second). The third-baseman cuts into the diamond (as indicated by the arrow) to be ready to intercept the ball as it is thrown home. The second-baseman covers second, short-stop covers third. The third-baseman should intercept the ball and throw to second if the ball is going wide, especially if he is told to do so by the catcher (in case it is too late to catch the man at home). The play to second may cut off the batsman, who will be going there on the throw home. The centre-fielder backs up second base, the pitcher backs up home-base.



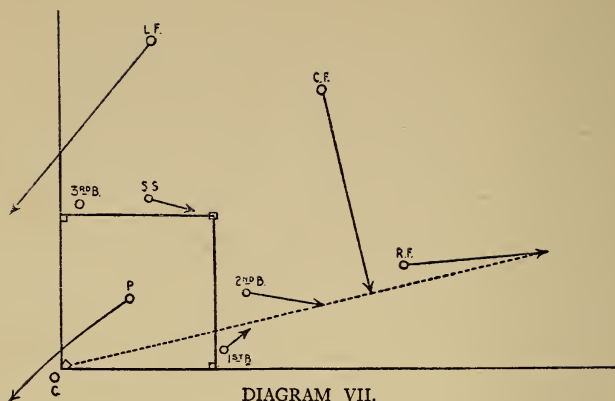
Showing a play being made after the ball is hit past the left-fielder. The ball is recovered by the left-fielder, and thrown to the centre-fielder, who has got in line with the throw in. Then the centre-fielder throws either to third base or home according to the directions of the short-stop, who has run out toward the centre-fielder, and is backing him up. The pitcher backs up third base, the first-basemen backs up the catcher, and the second-baseman covers second base. The right-fielder backs up second base.



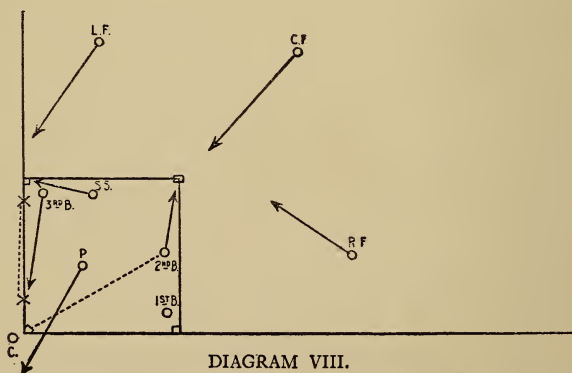
Showing a play being made after the ball is hit into deep left centre field. The ball is recovered by the centre-fielder, and is thrown to the left-fielder, who takes a position in line with the home-plate. The left-fielder throws either to third base or home according to the directions of the short-stop, who is backing up the left-fielder. The pitcher backs up third base, the first-baseman backs up home-base, the second-baseman covers second base, and the right-fielder backs up second base.



Showing a play being made after the ball is hit into deep right centre field. The centre-fielder recovers the ball and throws it to the right-fielder, who is in line with the throw home. Then the right-fielder throws either to third base or home according to directions from the second-baseman, who is backing up the right-fielder. The left-fielder and pitcher back up third base, and the short-stop covers second base. The first-baseman backs up home-plate.



Showing a play being made after the ball has been hit past the right-fielder. The right-fielder recovers the ball, and throws it to the centre-fielder, who has crossed over in line with the throw home. The centre-fielder throws either to third base or home according to the directions from the second-baseman, who is backing up the centre-fielder. The left-fielder backs up third base, pitcher backs up home, short-stop covers second.



Showing a play being made to retire a runner between third base and home. The runner is on third base, the ball is hit to the second-baseman, who throws home and then covers second. The runner starts for home (dotted line x to x), but stops when he sees that he is caught (allowing the batter time to go to second). The third-baseman, to retire the runner between third and home, quickly follows the runner in, retiring him on one throw from the catcher; then the third-baseman throws to second to retire the batsman, who will be trying for that base.

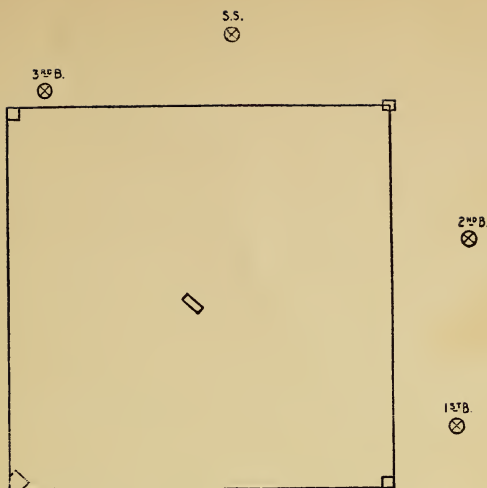


DIAGRAM IX.

Showing the entire infield playing back. From these positions, the infielders are enabled to cover the maximum amount of ground on all kinds of hit balls. These positions should be assumed only when it is unnecessary to play for a runner at home, or to hold a runner close to the base. For detailed directions as to when to take these positions, see Chapter X on "Team Plays." There are occasions, even with a runner on third base, when it is advisable to assume the above positions.



DIAGRAM X.

Showing the entire infield playing in. In these positions the infielders are able to handle with great rapidity all ordinary balls hit directly at them, or nearly so, and therefore can readily shut off runs at the plate. Before assuming these positions, however, players should study carefully Chapter X on "Team Plays." The infielders should here gauge their distances from the home-plate by the hitting ability of the batter. Close in on a weak hitter—but be cautious before a slugger.

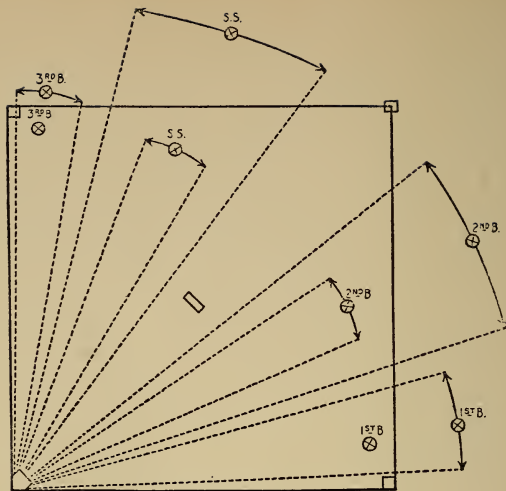


DIAGRAM XI.

This diagram illustrates roughly the advantage in covering ground which the infielders have when playing back. By playing inside of the diamond, the infielders bring themselves within such close range of the batter, that after the ball is hit, they have little or no time to move to the right or left. While by playing well back and outside of the diamond, they are able to run several paces in either direction before the ordinary ball can get by them. Of course, balls hit on a line between fielders go for base-hits—no matter where they play.

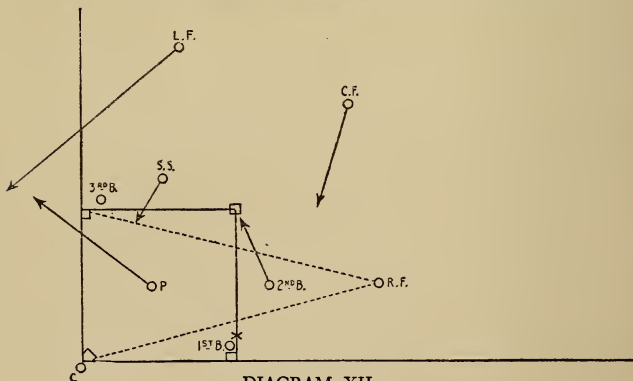


DIAGRAM XII.

Showing a play being made after a hit to the right-fielder (with a runner on first base). The right-fielder throws the ball to third base to head off the runner. The short-stop should get in line with the throw (about thirty feet from third base), and if the throw is one which will not catch the man at third—usually the third-baseman directs the short-stop here—the short-stop should intercept the ball and throw it to second to head the batter off there. The pitcher and left-fielder back up third base, the short-stop covers second, and the centre-fielder backs up second.

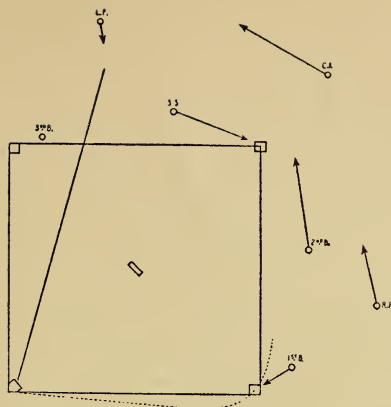


DIAGRAM XIII.

A hit to left field. The dotted line illustrates what is meant by "making your turn at first base." By making your turn in this manner you save ground and time in getting to second should ball be fumbled. This is the correct way of running out base-hits and fly-balls.

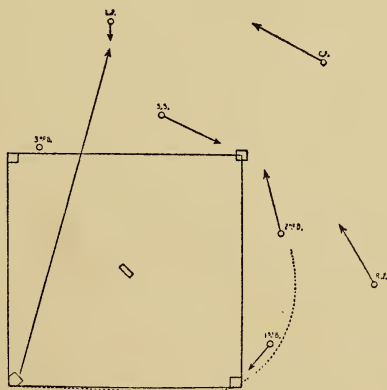
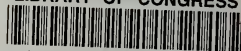


DIAGRAM XIV.

A hit to left field. The dotted line shows the incorrect way of running out a base-hit. This illustrates the advantage of making your turn before reaching first base, as shown in Diagram XIII.

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